REPORT RESUMES

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EDUCATIONAL MEDIA (TV) FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD. FINAL REPORT.

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OREGON STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MONMOUTH

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THE PHILOSOPHY AND CONTENT OF EIGHT EDUCATIONAL TV SERIES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WERE DESCRIBED BY THE PEOPLE WHO CREATED THEM. PHOTOGRAPHS ARE INCLUDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL MEDIA - STILL PICTURES, FILMS, GRAPHIC AIDS, MODELS, PUPPETS, AND PICTURE BOOKS - IN ASSOCIATION WITH TELEVISION. THE PAPERS THAT MADE UP THIS REPORT INCLUDED SOME INDICATIONS OF THE DIRECTION THAT PRESCHOOL ETV MAY MOVE IN THE FUTURE. (AL)

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EDUCATIONAL MEDIA (TV)
FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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Lester F. Beck

Final Report

Title VII-B

National Defense Education Act of 1958

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teaching
research

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TEACHING RESEARCH

Oregon State System of Higher Education

Monmouth, Oregon

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To the Reader:

The best examples of the creative use of educational media (still pictures, films, graphic aids, models, puppets, picture books, etc.) for preschool education are found in the field of educational television which itself is a potent educational medium. Looking to the future, ETV undoubtedly will become a prime means of serving the intellectual needs of all preschool children--those at home as well as those enrolled in a nursery school or kindergarten. This monograph brings together the views and experiences of specialists who already have experimented with the TV medium in preschool education. Besides illustrating the broad use of various educational media, the several papers provide clues as to the direction that preschool ETV likely will move in the immediate future.

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SCHOOLS, PRESCHOOLS, AND MEDIA

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In 1945, the American Association of School Administrators recommended the extension of school services down to include children as young as three. This action was taken in recognition of the psychological fact that early learning during the preschool years facilitates later learning in the grades. Or, stated conversely, a child from an intellectually barren home is disadvantaged right from the start when he enters school.

In 1966, the School Administrators again recommended the inclusion of children as young as three and four in the regular program of the elementary schools. This recommendation was consistent with guidelines worked out by the Educational Policies Commission. Important as are the recommendations of the School Administrators and the Educational Policies Commission, it is unlikely that they will be implemented in the immediate future. School systems caught by the population explosion find themselves hard pressed to provide enough classrooms and teachers for the tide of pupils six and over without worrying about the millions under six idling away their time at home. Clearly, if needed educational services are to be provided to the preschool child, a new solution must be found to the problem. This monograph offers at least one alternative that school systems might seriously consider.

The preschool population of the United States is distinguished in three respects: (1) by its size; (2) by its intellectual potential; and (3) by its long educational neglect.

The number of children under six years of age in the United States stands at about 24,000,000. But this is a changing population. Each year four million babies are born into the preschool pool to offset an equal number of five year olds who become six and enter the first grade.

Longitudinal studies of mental growth indicate that within the first four years of life, the child grows as much as he will during the balance of his life. By the age of six, when he enters school, he will have passed the two-thirds mark on the road to adult intelligence.[1]

Despite the critical nature of the preschool years for mental development, they are the neglected years under our educational system. Even with Operation Head Start, not more than one preschool child in ten is in attendance at a nursery school or kindergarten at any given time. Nine out of ten are dependent upon intellectual stimulation in their homes--from their parents and siblings--for whatever mental growth that occurs.

Broadcast television offers one way for school systems to expand preschool programs at moderate cost without the headaches of additional bus service, classrooms, and teaching personnel. Nearly every American home, regardless of economic level, now has a television receiver. Through a combination of educational and commercial stations, it is possible to reach all but a fraction of preschool children in their own homes. A few school districts and ETV stations have begun to develop appropriate educational programs for children under six. Current programs have been produced more or less independently and vary considerably in both format and content. This is all to the good. By having a variety of programs, we can begin to assess the reactions of little children to different styles of broadcasting, and to learn more about what appeals to little children and has the greatest impact on their intellectual development. A study of the reactions of little children to representative programs is now under way.[2]

In succeeding chapters, the philosophy and content of eight educational TV series for preschool children are described in some detail by those who created them. Among other things, these programs illustrate the wide, intelligent use of educational media in association with television. Stories and story books, some illustrated with original drawings, and puppets, play an important role in nearly all the series. Filmed inserts make it possible to take the child on trips to see things and places far beyond his immediate environment. Catchy songs which the child is encouraged to learn and sing along with the television teacher create an active viewing climate. In some instances, a portion of the program may be addressed to the parent, who in turn assists the child beyond the limits of the TV broadcast. In other instances, special viewing centers are established where mothers may bring their tots, not only to view TV but to associate with other tots under the supervision of a skilled leader. Some programs are built around the concept of the traditional kindergarten. Others are less structured and exploit the TV medium by bringing novel and peak experiences to the little child as food for thought, play, and talk. In short, some programs place particular emphasis on process as well as on content.

Some programs aim to keep content simple and comprehensible to the little child; while others adhere to the philosophy that a high ceiling is better than a low floor to stimulate early cognitive development in all its dimensions.

The sundry differences among the various programs should not be taken to mean that some are necessarily better than others. It is quite possible that each series contains unique elements to aid learning and to stimulate cognitive development. The question now is: Which elements? Only through research can this question be answered.

NOTES

[1] Benjamin C. Bloom, Stability and Change in Human Characteristics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964).

[2] "Educational Television for the Preschool Child," a research study funded under Title VII of the National Defense Education Act, and conducted through the Teaching Research Division, Oregon State System of Higher Education, Monmouth, Oregon.

PREPARING FOR READING WITH TV

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Educational Innovation

Educational innovation is influenced by changing conditions within a society and by technological discoveries. As the rate of change increases and instructional procedures show signs of stress and strain in meeting the challenge, educational experimentation is encouraged. Generally accepted beliefs are re-examined and modified. New ideas and inventions are tried in an effort to increase educational efficiency.

The paragraphs which follow describe a recent cooperative attempt by the Denver Public Schools and the Carnegie Corporation to apply a modern technological development, educational television, to the solution of an educational problem--that of meeting the intellectual needs of preschool children brought about by changes within our society.

These changes, in recent years, have made the American way of life increasingly complex and exacting. They have placed new demands upon education. As a result of research, more knowledge exists. There is more to be taught and learned. The impact of numerous technological developments, coupled with changing patterns of child-rearing, may have fostered within youngsters the maturity and competency to deal with written and oral languages at early ages. Analysis of the environment in which children live shows their experiences to be different from those of children of past generations.

Parents as Partners

Parents, traditionally, have tended to carry on many informal activities as a means of developing their children's early reading ability. Generally, such practices were not encouraged because of prevailing beliefs concerning limitations imposed by maturation and a fear that incorrect methods might be used.

The first of these objections is no longer stated quite as dogmatically, because evidence concerning child growth and development is being re-appraised. This re-examination has resulted in a new appreciation of the need for enriching the environment of preschool children at all economic levels. Educational theorists are beginning to emphasize that the cognitive and conceptual development of young children may be fostered through appropriate environmental stimulation. Particularly relevant is the work of Brunner, Buhler, Moore, Piaget, Hebb, and White. Some, including J. McVie Hunt, suggest that early sensory and intellectual deprivation prevents the kind of intellectual and emotional unfolding that nourishes early learning and makes later learning possible.

The second barrier, that well-intentioned parents may do harm through lack of knowledge, is particularly susceptible to educational attack. If parents can be helped to improve their practices in teaching youngsters at home, it seems logical that more children will come to school prepared to learn to read.

The knowledge of our language that the children acquire in the home when they first learn to speak and listen is the foundation upon which initial instruction of reading and writing is based. Usually, the children who make rapid progress in reading are those who have heard good vocabulary usage, who have had a wide background of experiences, and who have enjoyed the pleasure of their parents reading to them regularly. Parents who provide these kinds of activities for their youngsters confer an enormous advantage upon them. However, when parents are willing to help their children in any aspect of home study, it is most advantageous if their efforts can be guided to complement the work of the school.

Use of ETV

Accordingly, a research study was proposed to present to parents via educational television a systematic, organized procedure of beginning reading instruction consistent with initial reading practices used in the schools. Seeking the active participation of parents in educational ventures in this manner is unique. The field of study selected appeared to be one of the most promising for extending education into the home and for securing parental cooperation. The recent success of books for parents on the teaching of reading, the continuing inquiry, "What can I do to help my child learn to read?" are evidences of this potential. At no age are parental interest and the possibilities for close home-school cooperation greater. Yet a very real question remained to be answered, "How best could the staff of the Denver Public Schools reach large numbers of parents?" If such instruction were to be offered in the organized parent education and preschool classes of the Denver Public Schools, it would influence, at most, a rather small portion of the populace. In an attempt to reach large numbers of adults representing many socioeconomic levels, the use of educational television was considered; for it has been estimated that approximately 95 percent of all homes now have television sets.

Educational Objectives

It has been established that individuals can learn from educational television. Viewers, it is known, can learn facts. Some evidence indicates they can also learn skills and attitudes. Increasingly, it is being proven that television is extremely effective when the learning experience requires viewing a demonstration. Therefore, it was proposed that techniques of teaching beginning reading be introduced to parents of young children via instructional television and parent manuals. The use of educational television to demonstrate to parents a planned sequence of steps for teaching beginning reading appeared to offer possibilities for reaching large numbers of adults. The specific objectives involved using educational television to:

1. demonstrate sound, organized methods of teaching reading to parents;
2. assist parents to see correct ways of working with their children and thus avoid pitfalls which might occur if parents were working on their own. There is

no substitute for expert instruction. The television demonstrations provide just such instruction for the parents;

3. serve as a means of stimulating and motivating parents in their initial and continuing efforts;

4. provide a "pacing" or more orderly progression than would otherwise be available.

Geographical Area Served by Broadcasts

The series Preparing Your Child for Reading was produced for use in the Denver metropolitan area by educational television station KRMA-TV. Following its initial presentation, New Hampshire's educational television station at Durham (WENH-TV) was asked by the National Educational Television and Radio Center to test the Preparing Your Child for Reading program before its release nationally to other educational TV stations. The findings of this study, which replicated the Denver project, indicated that the program had a significant influence and rendered a definite service to parents. As a result, the National Educational Television Network obtained the videotapes of the program and made them available for distribution to its member stations. Since the acquisition of the program by NET, the series has been telecast by a number of associated ETV stations across the United States and in Canada. Inquiries concerning the availability of the educational television programs should be forwarded to the National Educational Television Headquarters at 10 Columbus Circle, New York, New York.

Target Audience

The program was specifically designed for parents of preschool children. Through a parent questionnaire, many family characteristics--such as parent educational level, number of children, and type of occupation--were determined. The median age range of viewers was in the 31-35 age group for fathers and in the 26-30 year age group for mothers. The educational level of parents varied considerably, ranging from those who had not completed grade school to those who had completed college and even graduate school. The typical parent had at least a high school education. A categorization of parents based on Hollingshead's classifications of occupational levels showed that about 12 percent of the parents were unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Approximately 60 percent of the parents were skilled laborers, clerical workers, or white collar employees and 28 percent of the parents were business managers or in the professions. Analysis of this information revealed that the parents were evenly distributed among the three research groups in a manner which did not affect comparisons of the groups.

Program Format

The Preparing Your Child for Reading television series consists of 16 thirty-minute programs produced for parents and their preschool children. As the title indicates, the aim of the program is to help parents prepare their young children for reading. An experienced television teacher presents each lesson to the viewers. She explains to parents what they will be doing, and why they will be doing it. The TV teacher also suggests a number of activities which can be carried on informally in the home.

Following the explanation by the teacher, a television family--consisting of a mother, a father, a son, and a daughter--demonstrate several ways by which the steps suggested can be carried out.

The majority of the programs are intended to teach parents how they may work with their youngsters. There are two programs in the series which do attempt to teach directly the child in the home TV audience. The objective of these two programs is to provide parents with an objective appraisal of their instructional efforts.

Parent Guidebook

Essential to directing the efforts of the parents is a television guidebook, produced by the Denver Public Schools, entitled Preparing Your Child for Reading. The purpose of the guide is to provide parents with definite suggestions organized in the form of 16 lessons, one for each TV program. The guidebook contains special materials necessary for this instruction not normally found in the home. The lessons are designed to develop specific beginning reading skills. They are based upon procedures developed by Dr. Paul McKee and Miss M. Lucile Harrison, who have long been recognized as outstanding reading authorities. The guide is now published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, 110 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02107. All orders for this publication should be directed to the publishers.

The reading methodology used is designed to enable the child to discover independently what an unknown printed word is. The first step cultivates the ability to use the meaning of a sentence to supply a missing word. This is a frequently used reading skill. It is taught by the parents saying a sentence to the child, leaving out the last word. Using the meaning of the words that are spoken, the pupil can supply a missing word that makes sense. For example:

The baby drank his ____________.

This type of exercise makes the child aware of words and the manner in which they are put together to convey ideas. Learning that words must make sense is an essential requirement for success in reading.

A second step develops the ability to learn to use the common consonant sounds in words. These lessons are to teach the pupil to use the sounds he has heard--sounds which he uses as he speaks. This skill builds a phonetic foundation and helps a pupil determine unknown printed words when he later begins to read.

The pupil is also taught the names of the letters of the alphabet. This is not rote memorization of the alphabet. The aim is to promote recognition of the letters by name when they are seen. Both capital and small letters are taught to:

1. help the pupil tell the differences among letters and elements of words;
2. make it possible for him to think and talk about the parts of words; and
3. give him a form and name to associate with the sound he will learn later. The parent may help the child to learn the sound for which B stands by saying: "Ball and bat begin with the same sound as Bob. Can you think of another toy that begins with the same sound as ball and bat?"

The third step nurtures the ability to use oral meaning and the initial consonant sound to determine what an unfamiliar word is when seen in print for the first time. This procedure combines the first two skills, neither of which is adequate alone.

Broadcast Hour

Since the programs have been videotaped, it has been possible to vary the time of the telecasts. Experience and comment from parents seem to suggest either of two daily times for the weekly telecast. Some parents indicate a definite preference for an early afternoon period which allows the mother to give her undivided attention to the program. Others have expressed a wish to have the programs telecast in the evening when interested fathers may also view the instruction. Because two of the programs are intended for viewing by the children, an early evening time following the dinner hour was preferable. Both of these times seemed acceptable to the majority of the parents.

Special Production Techniques

A most helpful production technique has been made possible through the use of a special effects generator. This equipment enables the television instructor to be shown in one portion of the video picture, while a demonstration by the television family occupies the rest of the TV screen.

This procedure permits the television teacher to offer pertinent comment and call attention to the essentials of the demonstration.

Because an important aim of the series is to show parents how they may develop beginning reading skills in everyday activities, most of the programs are set in a typical home. To supplement this a number of film clips are used to demonstrate how the foundation for beginning reading instruction can be laid in other familiar settings. Thus there is a trip to the supermarket, a drive in the family automobile, a picnic, and a visit to the neighborhood library. In the library episode, parents are given a number of hints which will help them to make the best use of the library. Suggestions are made which will enable them to help their children select the best children's literature.

Personnel

Each program required the efforts of many individuals. As indicated earlier, the reading methodology was based upon the work of Dr. Paul McKee and Miss M. Lucile Harrison. The particular application of these ideas was the responsibility of personnel of the Department of General Curriculum Services of the Denver Public Schools. Program outlines were written by Gwendolyn M. Hurd and Erma L. Rimmel of the Denver Public Schools.

The programs were produced by personnel of KRMA-TV. Each program required a producer, a director, three television cameramen, necessary sound and special effects men, five members of the regular cast, plus other guests as needed.

The programs were rehearsed prior to being videotaped. Following their videotaping, they were reviewed by a special advisory board consisting of Dr. Mary C. Austin then of Harvard University, Dr. Dolores Durkin of Columbia University, Dr. Donald D. Durrell of Boston University, and Dr. Omar K. Moore then of Yale University. Their suggestions and comments concerning the filmed television lesson provided a basis for revising the programs. Much credit for the improved nature of the series should go to these individuals; however, it was not possible to incorporate all of the suggestions offered.

Evaluation

A research study was designed to find out whether parents, with professional assistance and direction provided via educational television, could prepare their children for reading at an early age.

With the assistance of the PTA and preschool teachers, groups of parent volunteers, with their children, were obtained. They were composed of members of organized preschool classes and participated in one of three groups. The three treatment groups were

- Group X. Parents received no instruction in teaching the basic reading skills. However, the children took the same tests as those in the other groups. This was done to distinguish between reading development as a result of teaching and reading development which might occur as the result of maturation.
- Group Y. Parents were provided instruction for teaching the basic reading skills through the use of a guidebook and via educational television lessons.
- Group Z. The parents were provided instruction for teaching the basic reading skills by means of the guidebook and the 16 mm. films of the television lessons. Films of the television lessons were shown to parents in the parent education classes. These classes, led by experienced teachers, met on alternate weeks to view two films and to discuss the lessons briefly. The purpose of this procedure was to determine if the reading activities could be presented effectively on film in communities lacking educational television facilities.

The instructional programs were begun during the month of January and continued for a total of sixteen weeks. The programs are essentially an adult education course and progress at a rate suitable to the adult level. As is emphasized in the guide and in the programs, children are not expected to proceed at this rate. Parents are cautioned to work with their children at a rate established by the child's ability and interest.

All children in the study were given an individual Stanford-Binet test to determine the levels of intelligence among the treatment groups. Tests 3 and 5 of the Test of Skills Basic to Beginning Reading, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company were administered to obtain an objective measure of the effectiveness of the teaching provided by parents. These tests measure knowledge of letter names and sounds which research suggests are related to future reading success.

To determine the values of this adult education program to parents, the amount and kind of instruction given to children, and parental judgment about the worth of these activities, a special questionnaire was prepared and administered during the period when the children were being tested. Purchasers of the guidebook outside the study were also surveyed as a further means of evaluating the instruction. Covariance analysis was the primary statistical technique used to test the hypotheses of this study. It provides a test for differences in group performance on the dependent variable while adjusting the group values for any differences which are related to the control variables. In effect, covariance analysis statistically equates the groups.

Conclusions

The effectiveness of using educational television to instruct parents in preparing their children for reading is confirmed. The results show that educational television instruction of parents is as effective as that provided by experienced teachers in small discussion groups using 16 mm. films. The real value of this instruction becomes apparent when this finding is considered in light of the potential audience which can be reached by educational television stations.

This study further indicates that parents of preschool children can teach their youngsters certain basic skills of beginning reading, provided the boys and girls are about four and one-half years of age or older. The key word here is "taught." In this study, it appeared that the amount the child learned depended directly on the amount that someone practiced the beginning reading activities with him. Further, the minimum amount of practice established as necessary was thirty minutes. Statistically significant gains in achievement, as measured by the evaluative instruments, were made by those who practiced thirty minutes or more per week.

Reading to the child was also found to have a significant effect whether or not the child was in one of the groups which practiced the beginning reading activities. Many parents in the control group, in fact, read to their children and produced an increase in test scores. However, the best performance on the test was by children who had both practiced the beginning reading activities more than thirty minutes a week and had been read to more than sixty minutes a week. It appears, then, that reading to the child should be recommended in connection with the present beginning reading activities.

The results obtained indicate that parents can help prepare their children for reading, provided the children have sufficient mental maturity. Significant accomplishment, given sufficient mental maturity, depends primarily upon practicing the specified activities with the child.

Parental Reaction to Televised Instruction

Parents involved in the project have given it overwhelming approval. Over 85 percent of them stated on their questionnaires that they felt this was a good method for teaching the beginning reading skills. More than 80 percent thought that the instruction they received was helpful, and about the same number felt that the instruction was important for their children. About 70 percent said that they would like more help of this kind, and more than 75 percent stated an intention to continue practicing the beginning reading activities.

A high regard for education is evident in this group, and they would be expected to show interest in the televised beginning reading activities. At the same time, however, sharp criticism of any method not showing promise could be expected of them.

Summary

Reaction of parents toward the educational TV series, Preparing Your Child for Reading has been quite positive. Literally, thousands upon thousands of letters from parents have been received. Favorable comments contained in many of them concern three aspects of the television series:

1. the specific nature of suggestions for parents given by the television teachers and their reinforcement by the demonstrations of the television family;
2. the practicality of the parent guide in directing their efforts during the week between telecasts; and
3. the pleasure they received from helping their children discover the joy of learning through family centered activities.

In regard to the latter point, Dr. Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools, has written, "The program as presented was designed to give parents help in teaching their preschool children the skills basic to beginning reading. The interest and enthusiasm with which it was received supported our belief that parents are eager to give their children sound instruction at home that will benefit them when they enter school. . . . To establish an early competence in independent recognition of new words is a thrilling adventure for child and parents alike. Few efforts have given us as much satisfaction as this."[1]

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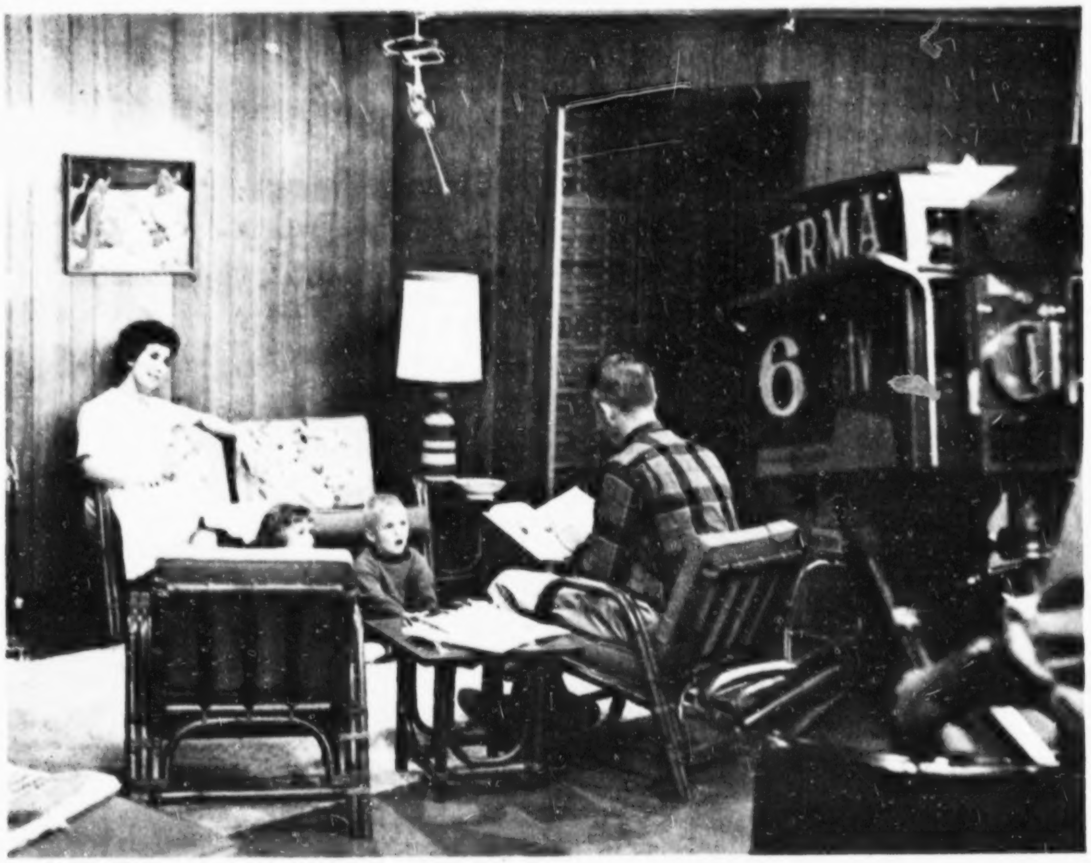
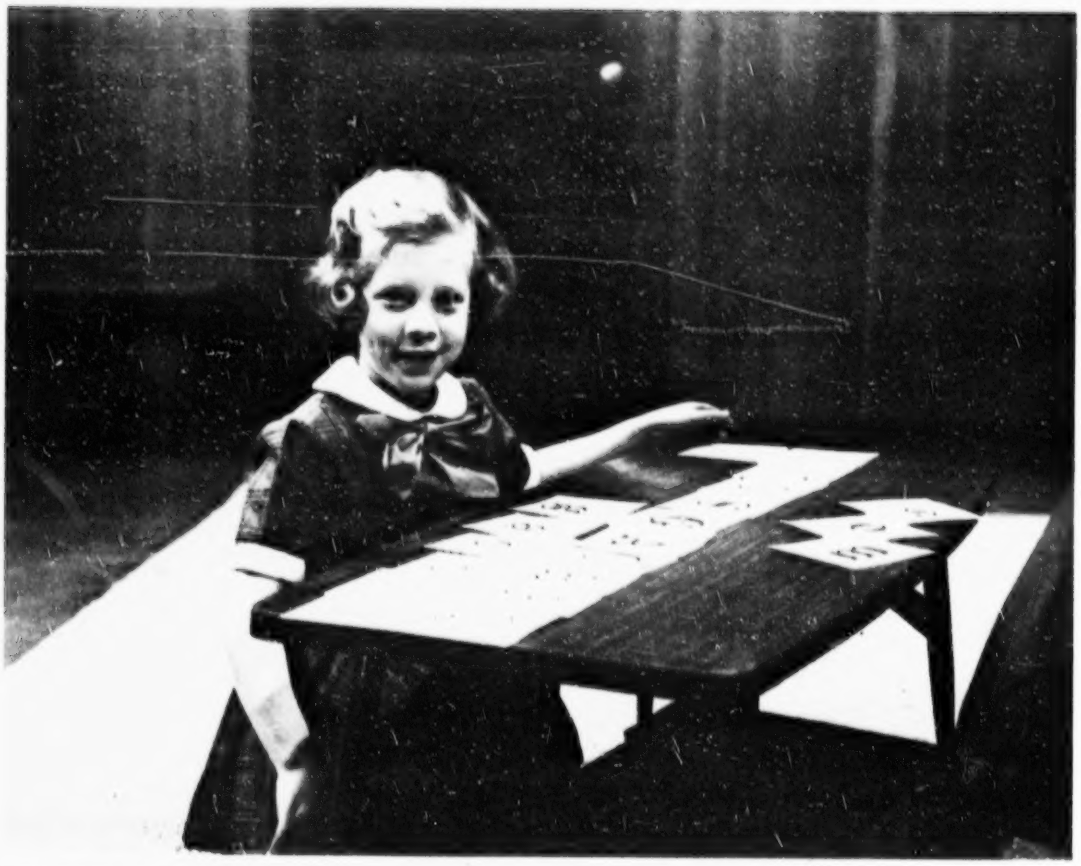
[1] Preparing Your Child for Reading. From the FORWARD, Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, Superintendent. Denver Public Schools, 1961.

Mrs. LaNore Adamson, television teacher on the Preparing Your Child for Reading series assists parents by suggesting activities they can carry on in the home. (KRMA-TV, Denver)



Mrs. Gwendolyn Hurd and Mr. Robert Heskett, parents in the "television family" for the Preparing Your Child for Reading program demonstrate the values of a daily story time with youngsters. (KRMA-TV, Denver)



Matching capital letters with their lower case forms is one of the activities developed by the Preparing Your Child for Reading series. (KRMA-TV, Denver)

TIME FOR SCHOOL

A Television Series Designed for the Preschool Child

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Introduction

Time for School, a television program designed for the preschool child, is broadcast daily by WTHS-TV, Channel 2, Miami, Florida. However, educational television for the preschool-age child is not new to Dade County. The Time for School program began as a summer series, six weeks of daily lessons for five year olds, telecast for the first time in June, 1958. The lessons were one-half hour in duration and featured activities planned to prepare the child for entrance into first grade. Similar summer series were presented in 1959 and 1960. The author of this article auditioned and was selected to teach these programs in June, 1960. The response of the viewing audience was most enthusiastic. The administrators of the Dade County Public Schools, aware that there were tax supported kindergartens in only a few of the schools in the county and prompted by the audience response, decided to include the Time for School telecasts as a part of the programming for the entire school year. Twenty minutes in the afternoon was the only time available in the broadcast schedule; therefore, Time for School was telecast at 1:00 p.m. each day during the 1960-61 school year.

In 1961-62, due to continued audience interest in the program, the Time for School lessons were repeated at five-thirty in the afternoon. However, many of the activities presented by the studio teacher were such that the children wanted to follow-up with similar activities at home. Therefore, in the fall of 1962, the broadcast schedule was revised to provide for two fifteen-minute Time for School programs which were spaced to allow for an "at home" work period. Parents were encouraged to form neighborhood groups cooperating to make it possible for their children to have a group experience with the television program providing the direction and the curriculum. Mothers would take turns having the groups of six or seven children in their homes to view the first television lesson. After the program, the group would work for one-half hour at the project suggested by the telecast with the resident mother supervising.

The children would return to the television set for the second program which concentrated on stories, poems and language arts activities. In some areas community recreation centers were used as meeting places with parents cooperatively supervising the children and using materials purchased by the PTA of the local elementary school. The lessons were broadcast at 9:30 a.m. and at 10:15 a.m. Both of these programs were repeated in the late afternoon. The broadcast schedule for the Time for School program in 1963-64 was similar to the schedule described for the 1962-63 school year.

In the fall of 1964, with the increasing awareness of the need for a preschool experience for the children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, the John F. Kennedy Program was instituted. Students attending the Miami-Dade Junior College, who were in need of financial assistance, were selected to serve as "leaders" with groups of preschool children during the morning hours and in the afternoon the students attended classes at the junior college. In return for their services the students' tuition was waived and they were paid five hundred dollars per year. Instruction for the five year olds was provided via television by the studio teacher. Follow-up activities were the responsibility of the leaders in each preschool center.

To accommodate the John F. Kennedy Program, the broadcast schedule of the Time for School program was increased to three fifteen-minute lessons each day, with all lessons repeated in the late afternoon. One of these lessons was planned to meet the special curriculum needs of the disadvantaged five year olds, most of whom had had few enriching experiences prior to their joining the preschool groups. Two teachers were appointed to assist the studio teacher in the production of the lessons. This team of studio teachers originated the monthly preschool supplement which was a daily guide to the telecast activities.

This has been a brief resumé of the development of the Time for School program from 1958 to 1964. The remainder of this report describes in detail the program as it is in operation at the present time.

Two fifteen-minute lessons designed for the preschool child are produced in the studios of WTHS-TV, Channel 2, Miami, Florida. The programs are transmitted via an open circuit broadcast system. The transmitter is located in Hallandale, Florida and the signal is received as far north as Deerfield Beach and as far south as Homestead, Florida. The fringe areas for reception of the Channel 2 signal extend from West Palm Beach to Key Largo.

Aims and Objectives

One of the fifteen-minute Time for School lessons, which is subtitled in the monthly preschool supplement the "JFK" lesson, is planned to meet the special curriculum needs of children who have had few experiences prior to their entrance into a preschool group. The purpose of the JFK lesson is (1) to expand the environment of the disadvantaged five year olds, (2) to introduce the children to the language patterns generally used in the school environment, (3) to provide activities which stimulate the interest and participation of the disadvantaged child, and (4) to demonstrate for the leaders in the John F. Kennedy program teaching techniques appropriate for use with the culturally different preschool child.

The second Time for School program, which is subtitled "Let's Imagine," is designed to widen the world of the child who has had many varied experiences before entering a preschool group. The "Let's Imagine" lessons are planned to include language skills, concepts in science and mathematics, rhythmic experiences and art activities in accordance with the more advanced readiness of the average five year old. The aims and objectives of this lesson include the following: (1) to foster attitudes of creativity and originality, (2) to increase vocabulary, (3) to develop a readiness for learning to read, (4) to encourage the art of listening, (5) to cultivate an enjoyment and appreciation of music, (6) to develop an understanding of number and arithmetic relationships, (7) to foster an attitude of experimentation--"Let's try it!", an attitude of observation--"Let's watch and see!", and an attitude of curiosity--"Let's find out!", (8) to cultivate desirable social habits. Although the "JFK" lessons and the "Let's Imagine" lessons do follow a similar curriculum, the scope and sequence and the method of presentation vary.

The studio teachers compile the Preschool Monthly Supplement which describes each day's telecasts. The supplement includes nursery rhymes, finger plays, poems, games and songs related to the televised instruction. There are also specific suggestions for classroom activities to be used before and after each television program. The follow-up experiences are designed to augment the concepts presented during the televised lesson. The supplements are distributed to leaders and teachers in the Dade County Public Schools free of charge. Parents and teachers in private schools may purchase the supplements from the textbook department of the Dade County Public Schools for twenty-five cents per copy.

Staff and Budget

A team of three teachers is responsible for the presentation of the Time for School programs. The author functions as the team leader. The producer-director of the preschool programs is responsible also for a social studies series which is televised twice each week. The art department, a team of three artists, devises visualization for the preschool programs; however, the services of the artists must be shared with fifteen other studio teachers who also are broadcasting lessons. The coordinator of instructional television materials assists all teachers in procuring films, pictures and three dimensional visuals. The studio personnel involved in production include the two cameramen, floor manager, audio engineer, video engineer, film projectionist and video recording engineer. It has been estimated that each fifteen-minute preschool television lesson costs approximately one hundred and sixty-five dollars, exclusive of personnel. This figure includes the cost of the video tape which is being used to record the series for permanent hold. However, the policy of the school board is such, at the present time, that the series is not available for rental or purchase, but a video tape recording may be borrowed for preview purposes.

Program Design

Many people contribute to the success of the Time for School program; however, the primary contributors are the author, Ceil Hack, with the assistance of team teachers Carolyn Barnette and Nina Tepedino, and producer-director, Denis Ryan.

Miss Barnette has assumed, for special production effects, the roles of clown, Indian, ice-skater, witch, etc., but her major contribution to the Time for School telecasts has been that of puppeteer, creating the personality of Drucilla Dragon. Drucilla is a hand puppet which was made by Soni Fratkin, a member of the art department. The arms of the puppet have been wired to permit Drucilla to play simple rhythm instruments, paint and draw pictures and move her arms in time to music. The role of Drucilla is that of a five year old student and her reactions to Mrs. Hack are child-like without being childish.

Music is Miss Tepedino's contribution to the Time for School program. She makes music an integral part of every lesson by selecting songs which are appropriate to the content of the lesson and are in accordance with the interests and abilities of the preschool child. In addition to singing and teaching the songs, she plays the piano, drum, recorder, autoharp and guitar. Often, as the studio teacher is telling a story, Miss Tepedino plays background music which captures and enhances the mood of the story. When recorded music is used as background for film narrations and for art activities, such as brush painting and finger painting, Miss Tepedino makes the selections in terms of the overall effect being conveyed by the studio teacher.

Denis Ryan, producer-director, has been with the Time for School program since it began in 1958. For the six years that the author and he have worked together, Mr. Ryan has developed a sensitive understanding of young children. Through his ability and knowledge in the field of television production he has been able to assist the teacher in conveying, via the medium, those concepts pertinent to learning. His realization of the influence of television on the preschool child has prompted him to devote many hours of his personal time to creating visuals for the lessons. He constructs simple but effective props, he illustrates folk tales and has produced an animated nursery rhyme film as well as film clips which have been used on many of the programs in the series.

The studio set for the Time for School program is of minor importance, serving simply to define an area within which the studio teachers perform. The set has been designed in such a way that it can be set up quickly and easily since the series is in production five days each week. There is little or no decoration in order to avoid distracting attention from the studio teachers or from the visuals being presented. A movable partition which has been designed with a shelf is an essential piece of equipment when Drucilla appears on the lesson. Miss Barnette, who manipulates and speaks for Drucilla Dragon, sits behind this partition with the puppet extended up and over the wall and controls and limits the movements of Drucilla by observing a monitor. The shelf serves as the work area for Drucilla when she paints, draws pictures or handles objects. The height of the shelf permits the puppet to be at the teacher's eye level, and then the camera can get a head and shoulders shot of the teacher with the puppet.

The Time for School series includes lessons in all of the curriculum areas: science, mathematics, art, language arts, and social studies. The format of each program varies in terms of the content, but most often there is a central theme, or topic for each fifteen-minute lesson. The studio teacher alone, or with Drucilla's help, stimulates interest in the theme. On occasion, Miss Tepedino uses a song to introduce the theme for the program. The studio teacher speaks either directly to the camera, which represents the child viewing the program, or to Drucilla, and in that way indirectly to the viewer, as she develops the content of the lesson.

Techniques for presenting concepts in each of the curriculum areas vary. For example, when the lesson deals with a science concept, the approach is one of investigation and discovery with the cameras observing as if they were the eyes of the child. However, when the lesson deals with auditory discrimination, opportunities are provided for the child to use his ears to determine the nature of a particular sound before he is presented with the visualization of that which is making the sound. In the former example, Drucilla would not be a part of the lesson presentation because she may serve as a distracting factor rather than one which contributes to the learning of the viewers. In the latter example, Drucilla and Mrs. Hack would take turns creating sound. While one produces the sound, the other tries to determine the source of the sounds. In this case the children viewing would be encouraged to participate in the guessing game.

Guests from the community appear on occasion. For example, the fireman visits the studio during fire prevention week, the policeman brings the push button traffic light to the studio to explain its use and the zoo keeper brings animals from the zoo. Children, six at a time, appear on approximately one program each week. They are usually selected from the preschool groups which are utilizing the televised lessons as part of their classroom instruction. The primary purpose for having the children appear is to demonstrate those games and activities which are difficult to visualize without the presence of children.

For the children from disadvantaged backgrounds the television appearances provide one means of promoting improved concepts of self. When the children appear as part of the lesson they feel important and the children from their preschool group, identifying with them, also feel important. There are indications that the school's patrons take pride in the fact that members of their community are on television. The school gains status from the fact that it is the agency which makes the appearance possible.

The following quotation was taken from a letter written by a preschool leader to the studio teacher:

> Wednesday was a great day for the preschool class of the Van E. Blanton School when six children represented the group at the Time for School birthday party. The children who view the telecast at school identified with their friends on the screen.
>
> Planning together for the event, as well as the joy of participating, either as a star or viewer, presented many worthwhile experiences.
>
> I speak for Mrs. Evelyn Gilbert, our principal, the preschool children and their parents, as well as other big and little citizens of our community, when I say, "Thank you."

This letter indicates the importance which was attached to the television appearance of the children.

The children who view the Time for School program are encouraged to participate in the activities being presented. Much thought is given to determining ways of involving the audience in the lesson. Letters and phone calls received by the studio personnel indicate that the children do clap in time to the music and nursery rhymes, do respond to questions asked by the studio teacher, do guess with Drucilla or Mrs. Hack when they are playing a guessing game and do sing the songs with Miss Tepedino. There is indication also that the children are following through, at home and in preschool groups, with activities which have been suggested by the Time for School telecasts.

The Audience and Their Evaluations

The "JFK" lessons in the Time for School series are planned to meet the special curriculum needs of five year olds from low socioeconomic backgrounds. These lessons are broadcast at 8 a.m., 9 a.m., and 5 p.m. The "Let's Imagine" lessons, televised at 9:15 a.m. and 5:15 p.m., are designed for five year olds from middle class socioeconomic backgrounds. However, children watching the lessons at home range in age from 2 to 7 years. The two year olds do not usually maintain continuous attention but they do watch portions of the programs. First and second graders often watch the programs at 5:00 and 5:15 in the afternoon. Letters from parents indicate that many children who view the morning telecasts enjoy seeing the lessons repeated in the afternoon.

The lessons have proven to be of interest to a divergent audience. Teachers of special education classes for adults and children find the television lessons a valuable supplement to their planned classroom activities. The programs are viewed also by immature first graders who need additional readiness experiences before they are introduced to formal instruction. The teachers conducting kindergarten classes for the children of migrant workers have found the "JFK" lessons an excellent resource. Private and church schools use the "JFK" lessons with their four year olds and the "Let's Imagine" lessons with the five year olds.

In letters to the author of this article, parents and teachers have made the following comments: (1) ". . . from a mother whose two little ones derive a great deal of pleasure and knowledge from your program"; (2) "I have a group of mentally retarded children ages 7-10 and they look forward to you each day"; (3) "I have two boys age 4 and 5, who watch your show every day. At eight o'clock they have their choice to see Time for School, Captain Kangaroo or Romper Room and they always choose Time for School. They enjoy it as well as 9 a.m. and 5 p.m."; and (4) "Thank you so very much for helping to provide my two preschoolers (ages 4 and 2-1/2 years) with truly enjoyable and educational entertainment."

The Time for School programs have developed a receptive and appreciative audience. Many youngsters of preschool age in south Florida are enjoying intellectually stimulating experiences which they may never have had were it not for televised instruction. The years of early childhood are years filled with curiosity, enthusiasm and a thirst for discovering. Educational television can help to foster and develop these attitudes. Educational television can help children to remember, and their parents to re-discover, that learning is exciting, learning is fun and that learning is within the reach of all.

* * * * *

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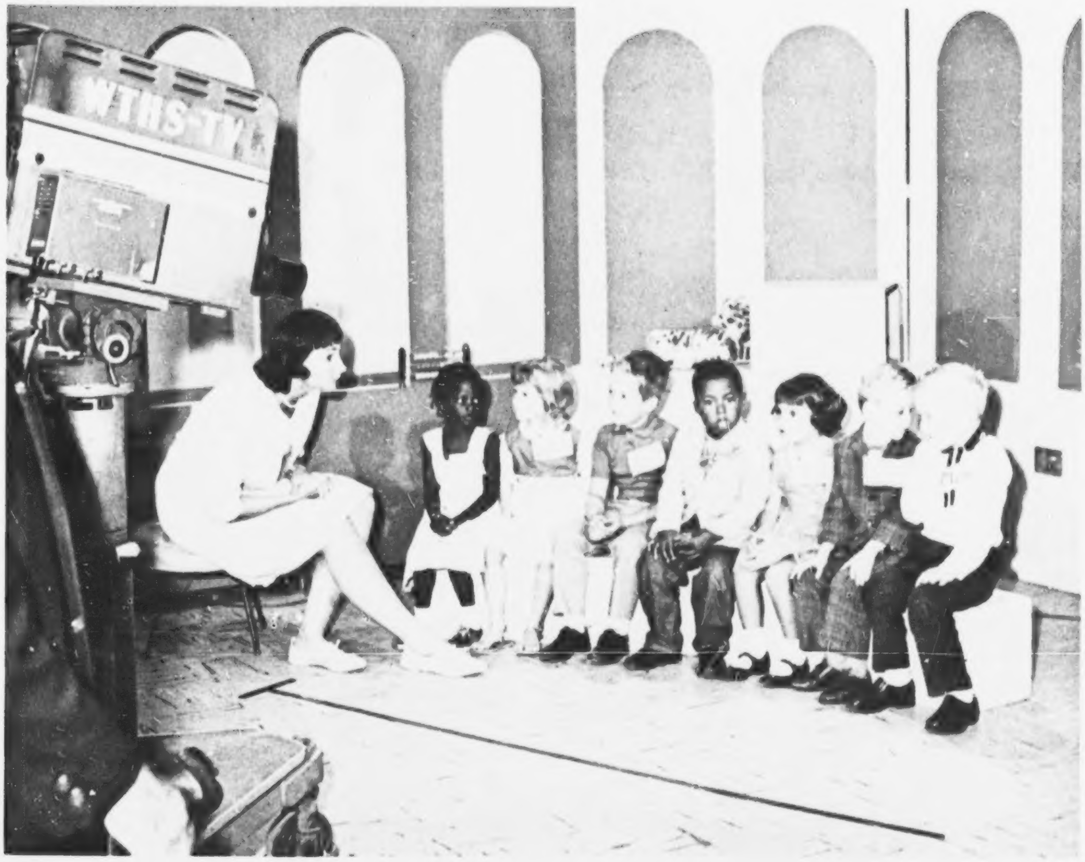
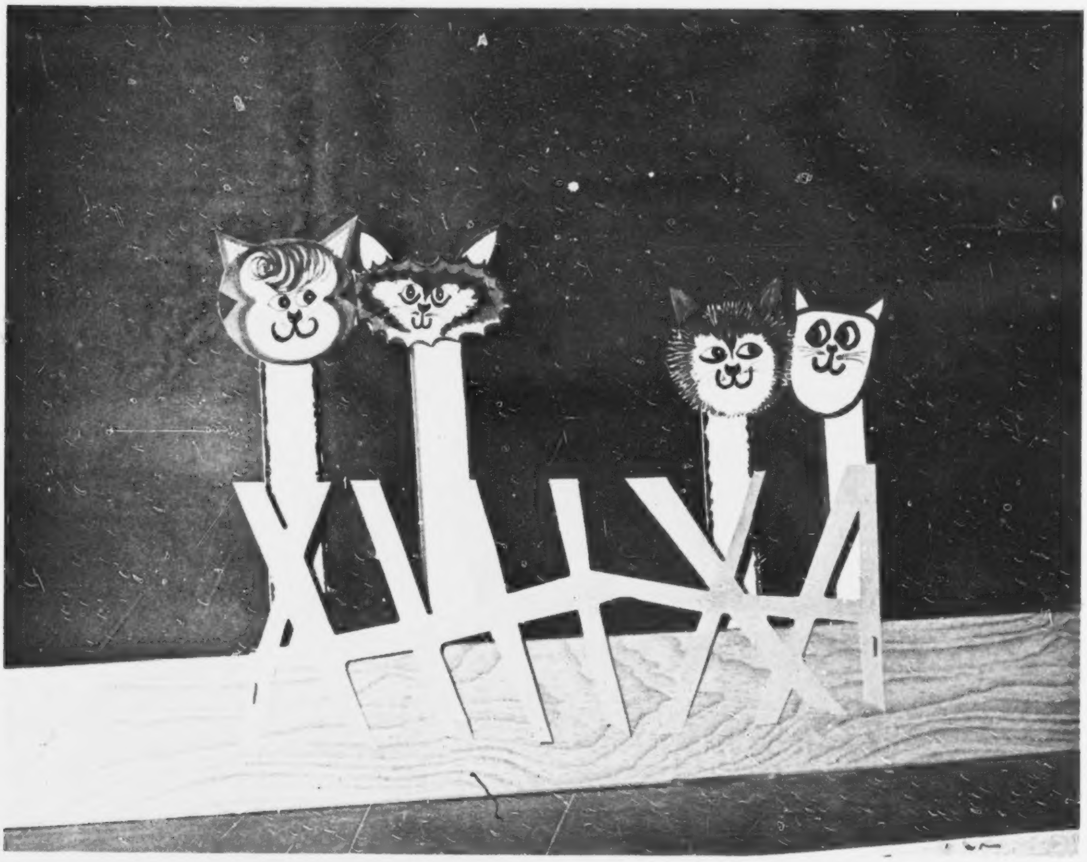


Children regularly participate in the programs of WTHS-TV, the theory being that the children at home can identify with one or more of the children on television. (WTHS-TV, Miami)



These cats visualize the song, "Going Down the Numbers." The cats are grouped as we sing "one by one" (one cat), "two by two" (two cats), "three by three" (two cats plus one cat), "four by four" (two cats plus two cats). (WTHS-TV, Miami)

Dick Cargill, safety education officer, instructs the children in the use of the push button traffic light. Each 15-minute program is repeated twice, first at a beginning level and then at a more advanced level with a more specific vocabulary. (WTHS-TV, Miami)

MI RE DO

A New Formula for Children's Television

Otto Schlaak, Ph.D.
Manager, WMVS/WMVT
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Introduction

The twenty-one inch television screen reveals a close-up shot of a cute four year old boy gleefully squeezing water out of a sponge. Next, the viewer sees a close-up of his five year old girl friend industriously pouring water from a battered tin can into an old kitchen sieve, and watching, in rapt fascination, as it trickles through and into the "water table" below . . . The audio: murmurs of, "Hey, look . . . the sponge keeps the water." "The wire doesn't" . . . trickling water . . . splashes, grunts, gurgles, giggles, sighs, hammering, scratching and occasional clapping of small hands.

This is the Mi Re Do show . . . a different TV experience for children and their parents; and these are the sights and sounds of 13 four, five and six year olds discovering before the television cameras of WMVS, Milwaukee's ETV station, interesting things about the world in which they live. It all takes place under the guidance of their imaginative and unconventional teacher, Mrs. Rexine Langen, who enjoys helping them show other children and their parents what fun it can be!

The Mi Re Do show is a series of 18 quarter-hour television programs which grew out of a project that moved a pre-primary classroom from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Campus Elementary School to WMVS. The major emphasis of the project began in 1964 and, conducted by Mrs. Langen, was to give children an opportunity for early intellectual development, allowing the child's natural curiosity to lead him into a variety of new experiences. Further, this was to be done on a multi-age level grouping of three, four, five and six year olds! The specific interest areas selected for the children were science, pre-math, pre-writing, pre-reading, and social science.

This Campus School experiment looked so interesting and full of possibilities that the ETV station asked Mrs. Langen if she would be willing to bring her class to the WMVS studios to share the experiences with the television audience. Her agreement brought the children, the project and Mrs. Langen to ETV. WMVS assigned producer-director, Frank Strnad, to the series, and the Mi Re Do show was born.

Objectives of the Series

The educational objectives of the Mi Re Do show are many and specific. But, boiled down to their essence, the series strives to reach several audiences simultaneously: the parent, the pre-primary child (both of whom can learn much together), student teachers in early childhood education who need to observe such play activities, and possibly parent study groups and PTAs. Parents were to be helped to make use of the vast learning situations which exist within their homes; it was hoped that they would be motivated to encourage their children's budding curiosities about the world around them. It was planned to give the children viewing activities which would upgrade and enrich their play, and which would improve the learning environment in the home. In addition, it was hoped that the program would provide wholesome and challenging play stimulus for the children who viewed it.

The Format of the Programs

The format of Mi Re Do is one of apparent casual organization in a studio replica of a kindergarten.

Actually, the organization was very carefully done; teacher, producer-director and crew knew the sequence of events thoroughly before taping. Thirteen children of varying ages mentioned are set free to explore at sand tables, water tanks, carpentry benches, building block areas, painting easels, science tables, mathematic and book areas, etc. Mrs. Langen, the TV teacher-hostess, assists the children in the learning concepts, explaining to those viewing what is going on and the reason for the activity. The children show how much fun it is by just being themselves, which is no mean trick with three television cameras peeking closely at their every move, and microphones picking up each utterance.

During the series, Mrs. Langen explores things like magnets and how they pick up metal things; fraction concepts (given by cutting an apple in half and then in quarters); raisins are seeds . . . and also dried grapes; a raw potato can make designs for printing; a can opener is a lever; a dust pan a wedge; an egg beater is a wheel or gear . . . and a rolling pin is a cylinder. The result of such experimentation and exploration is to make obvious to mothers and teachers that the learning situations within the home are endless; and in the eighteen television programs a keen awareness of the possibilities in both child and parent is developed.

Topics Covered in Series

The program titles and the topics developed within them are rather indicative of the wide scope of the Mi Re Do series. With a basic theme of "Let's Discover Together," programs covered these areas:

1. The Introduction of the World of Shapes in Which We Live: carrying into two dimensional and three dimensional objects, using circles, triangles, squares in conjunction with a mobile. Identification of these shapes and how they might be used in the world in which we live.

2. Communicating to Viewers How Different Shapes Can Help Make Work Easier: simple machines are explained and explored . . . circles; wheels, pulleys, gears, . . . triangle; wedge, inclined plane and fulcrum . . . the hammer; a lever, the nail, a wedge, a screw an inclined plane, a gear a brace and bit. All demonstrated and used at the wood-working bench.

3. Making Simple Machines: showing how simple machines are used, and how effective they are. The water table is used to demonstrate "light and heavy," the wheel and fulcrum are demonstrated.

4. Liquids and Solids: what they are, what they do. Demonstrations showing . . . solid turning to liquid, a liquid to gas, using objects and materials the children understand, such as milk, water, soda, etc.

5. Showing the Concept of Energy, and to Show the Role It Plays in Machines: a bike, egg beater and a can opener are used to demonstrate the ideas. Ways in which human energy uses simple machines.

6. Showing What Electrical Energy Is: beginning from

discovery that energy can be stored (using rubber bands, springs in toys, etc.), showing energy stored in a flashlight battery, and showing how electrical energy can work the electric egg beater.

7. A Demonstration of Electrical Living: the concepts of science and electricity and how we use it.

8. The Concept of Gravity: is shown through incline plane, teeter totters, jumping in the air, tossing objects in the air, and through use of pulleys.

9. Discovering Magnets: the principle and how magnets work, what they do for us. Demonstration of the power of magnets, how they work under water, what they attract.

10. Discovering Air and How Air Moves: and to show how air movements help us. Demonstrated through use of water table, electric fans, sailboats and pump toys.

11. Discovering Mathematics: the principles of it and finding materials in the home with which to involve children in mathematics.

12. Discovering Fractions: the possibilities that exist in the home to discover and explore math fractions through blocks, fruit, puzzles.

13. Discovering How to Measure: showing practical application for the use of measuring and how play situations lead to science of measuring . . . cooking. Water play used heavily in this program, with various sized containers.

14. Discovering Pre-writing Experiences: with demonstrations of the activities that lead to development of eye-level coordination for writing readiness. Play materials demonstrated . . . sand box, easel, table easel, Montessori materials . . . finger painting to music.

15. Discovering Sound and Color: and showing how it can be used to enrich viewer's environment. Use of colored water in bottles to show how new sounds can be created.

16. Discovering Pre-reading Experiences: showing how past experiences on previous programs could lead to reading readiness. Story telling and dictation of stories by group.

17. The World of Creative Dramatics: demonstrating that children do best in the areas where their perceptions are allowed a form of expression. Role playing, acting out stories, creating stories and acting.

18. Discovering the World of Music and Noise: with the science and math principles. Rhythm band instruments used and record player used.

When you set this kind of subject matter into an attractive and delightful kindergarten setting, complete with all necessary materials and add some creative production television techniques, the true essence of the Mi Re Do series emerges. This creative production and direction was supplied by Frank Strnad, producer-director for WMVS, who worked very carefully and closely with Mrs. Langen in bringing the concepts of the project to the television screen in an appealing, lively and dynamic manner.

Mi Re Do, as a series, was long on volunteer help and short on subsidies; the Campus School furnished all materials and equipment, the television station the settings, art work, special visuals, music and crew. No special funds were sought for the series; it was done as a part of WMVS' continuing interest in developing new and better television programs for children.

Production Techniques

The series was videotaped during the summer of 1965, when WMVS was not broadcasting during the daytime hours. It was possible, therefore, to set up an elaborate kindergarten setting in the studio and leave it in place for three weeks; the time it took to complete the eighteen programs. Before the series began, there were some doubts in the minds of Mr. Strnad and other station personnel that thirteen children could function usefully on a given program. It was felt that half this number would be more manageable. The large set, which filled the 25 x 30 foot studio area, managed to accommodate the children comfortably, affording seven or eight different work or "shooting areas," each with a particular emphasis. Thus, "13" became a magic number, working very well.

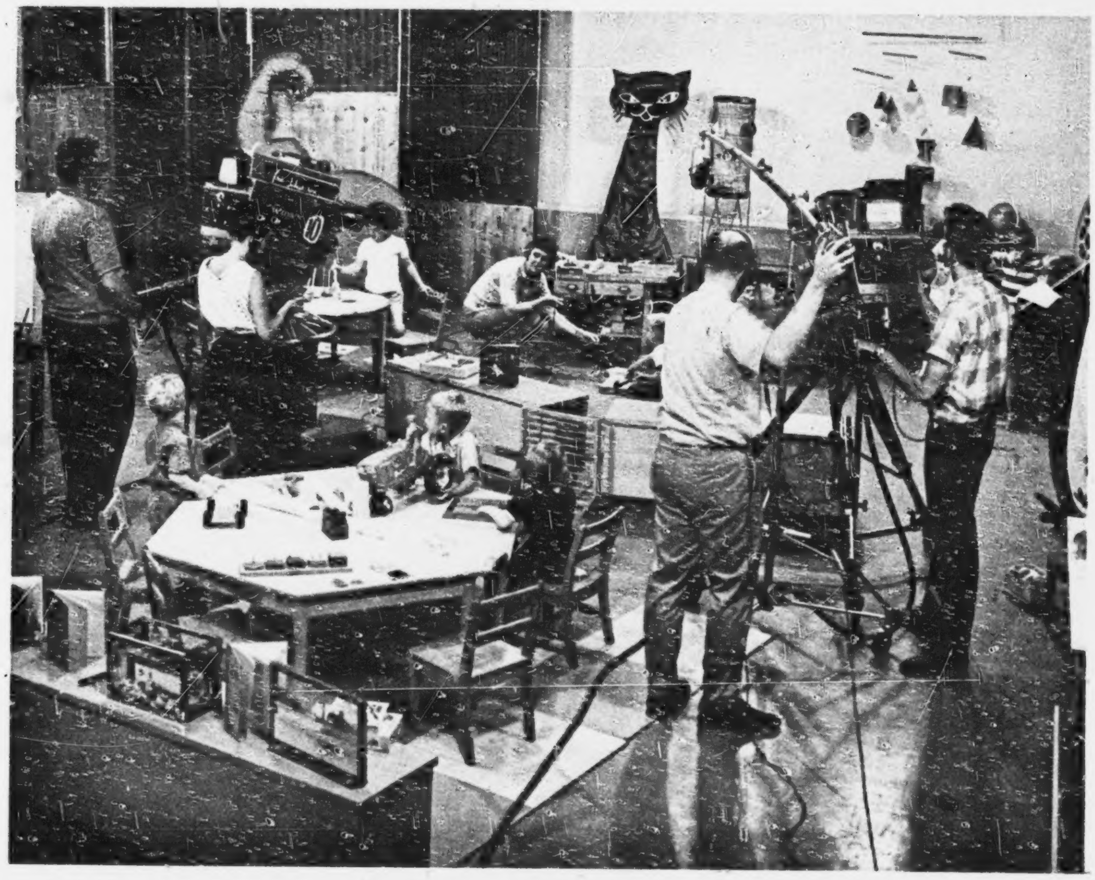
Programs were taped in the mornings. The normal pace was to tape two programs per morning. The children loved it. Brought to the studio by two parents who acted as assistant teachers during the program, they came right onto the set upon arriving and picked up their own activity. Occasionally, Mrs. Langen asked a child to perform a specific function, but, for the most part, the children were not informed of the day's lesson or program. Mrs. Langen moved from one area to another during the program, relating to the viewers the activities in which the children were involved and the materials they were utilizing. The volunteer teachers assisted, cared for the children during rehearsals, prepared juice for them, and provided activities outside the studio when the children were not involved. Their help was most vital, allowing the station crews to function smoothly with minimum distraction.

Three cameras were used to shoot the show, providing the director with flexibility and the ability to get excellent close-ups while working in a relatively wide area and with the ever-present danger of children moving into the path of one of the close-up cameras at a crucial moment. A boom microphone was provided to cover one major area; the teacher was miked with a lavaliere microphone, and hand microphones were spotted strategically about the set for interview situations with the children when they were required.

Audience Reaction to the Series

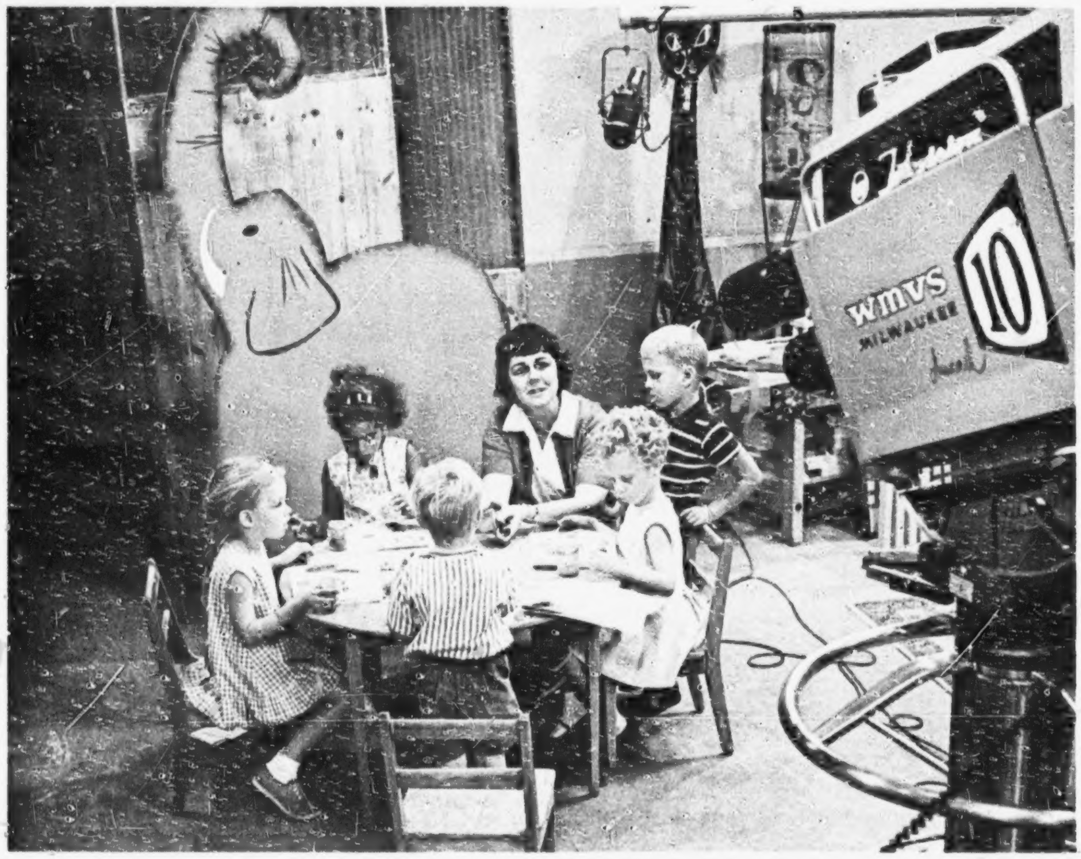
The Mi Re Do series, although something in the nature of an experiment or pilot series, was very rewarding to the station and those involved in it. It has created an interest on the part of the Campus School to work further in this area, and may have opened the door for future programs which are badly needed for today's children. Comments from viewers in the WMVS area upon completion of the first running of the series have been enthusiastic and gratifying. Mothers have expressed the desire to see more programs of this kind and to have them programed more often. (WMVS scheduled the programs for one morning showing, a noon-time telecast and a late afternoon showing.) Letters and postcards indicated that the mothers were watching along with their children as was intended and hoped for. Apparently children from the age of two to nine found the programs interesting and useful.

The Mi Re Do series is the property of station WMVS. The videotapes are available to all educational television stations in the United States for a modest rental fee, which covers the distribution of the tapes and the tape stock involved.



The Mi Re Do studio in full production at WMVS-TV, showing major play areas, the motif of the setting, diversity of activities in which the children are engaged, and the television crew in action. (WMVS-TV, Milwaukee)

The carpentry table was most effective and popular on Mi Re Do. The children were taught that tools are levers, gears, simple machines. Mrs. Langen shows a youngster the principle of a threaded bolt or screw, emphasizing household objects to use to explain mechanical principles, and the fun of finding out. (WMVS-TV, Milwaukee)



Teacher-hostess chats informally with the children as they play, pointing out to viewers materials used, techniques developed, and how activity might be set up in the home. Note the microphone technique used, and the camera concealed behind the flat in back of the elephant. (WMVS-TV, Milwaukee)

ALL ABOARD WITH MR. BE

Allen Bates
Children's Program Director
WKNO-TV (Channel 10)
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee

Introduction

In 1963, I was hired to WKNO-TV to create, write, and perform a series of television programs for little children under six. I knew few people so young, and I was a little frightened of them and my ideas about them were abstract and romantic.

I still think they know a lot, and they are intricate, funny, dignified, poetic, sad, illogical, selfish, awkward, and creative. They have an infinite capacity for wonder and few groups of persons are less understood.

We invariably replace their intrinsic, wild associative poetry with insipid jingles and sentimental pap, their delicious vision with timid photographs, their crazy Joycean vocabulary with inhibited syntax, and their vivid natures with military courtesy. Their only defense is to play the fool for our benefit and go back to their secrets when we leave the room.

Television has always made a generous contribution to this well-meaning conspiracy against the child. It has given him singing commercials instead of folksongs. It has enabled him to identify a stagecoach quicker than a rose. With few exceptions, most television for children is usually either silly or dull, and although the pretentious prospecti promise to widen the world of the child, the programs themselves impose upon that world with a falsity as ironic as contagious missionaries teaching hygiene to natives.

With the aid of a grant from the Junior League of Memphis, we at WKNO-TV have produced over two hundred videotapes for the series, All Aboard with Mr. Be. Some of the programs have shortcomings, to be sure, but most realize the broad objectives of the series. Nearly all have been extremely popular with the children for whom they were created.

Objectives

What are the objectives of All Aboard? Basically, the series is designed to prepare the preschool child for the first grade. Some of our objectives were to develop the child's imagination and resourcefulness, to increase his powers of association and response, to develop manual dexterity, to preserve and nourish the child's capacity for wonder, and to encourage him to express himself. These are noble goals, but on paper they tend to have a hollow ring. Our more practical objectives were simply to captivate and teach the child, to be direct with him, to respect him, and to expose him to a warm and enriching atmosphere.

Developing a Format

This atmosphere developed gradually. At first, we had only a revolving platform left over from an earlier series and no ideas. The central character needed a name, a costume, a personality, and a place to live. Was he a cowboy, ringmaster, spaceman, uncle, postman, sea captain, gang leader, clown, or piper? Was he an authority or a conspirator? Was he a comic rebel or a straight man? Did he live in a cave, a circus, a castle, a barn, or on the moon?

The revolving platform suggested motion; circular motion suggested a train. The revolving unit could be utilized as a base for a two-dimensional train, and each of the cars would provide an interesting proscenium for a different activity. Since children are attracted to power and most are attracted to trains, a format based on trains seemed like a good, if not profoundly original, ideas. We could call the series Round House; the central character could be a gentle engineer named Mr. Wonder, a man who found beauty in ordinary objects and was disposed to look at things close up.

Round House was a good euphonic name for the series, but it was a title for adults, and Uncle Wonder did not sound right to us. Children tend to remember and call a series by the central character's name; therefore, we discarded both Round House and Uncle Wonder. It was decided to use the first letter of my real last name coupled with a title associated with trains. The central character and the series now had a name: All Aboard with Mr. Be, which, in time, became shortened in children's minds to Mr. Be.

A talented designer, Edward Graczyk, was hired to draw plans for the train. Thanks to him and to the imagination of the producer-director and the station heads, the humble concept of a two-dimensional cartoon train blossomed into a magnificent three-dimensional life-size model of a nineteenth century steam engine with a tender, two cars and a caboose. A depot exterior was added with a ticket window to accommodate puppets, and a porch for the central character. Then a depot interior was decided upon, as well as a fourth optional setting to represent a crossroads. This area was designed to be the destination of the train, now called the "Wonder Train," and appropriate sets representing different destinations could be constructed there according to the requirements of the script.

Although the train was splendid, the depot interior best manifested the desired atmosphere. The walls were gradually covered with a stuffed fish, a broken clock, posters by Picasso, a lantern from a ruined house, a picture of Freud, a painting by Van Gogh, berries and leaves, a drawing of Shakespeare, an ancient telephone, some old-fashioned sheet music, an old world map, a crazy hat, a turnip made of cloth, a painting of Mozart as a boy, and a sixty-three year old photograph of a young girl sniffing flowers. There were windows in the walls for puppets.

In the set itself, we placed a remarkable pot-bellied stove made entirely of cardboard and wood, several chairs, a table for demonstrations behind which a puppeteer might work, an aquarium, a giant birdcage, a broken statue of Mercury, a huge wagon wheel, a model of the Trojan Horse, and an antique trunk.

Now we had a name, a format, a set, and an elegant train. We still needed a theme, an opening and closing, and a talented puppeteer. We were fortunate to have dozens of puppets made by the former children's director at WKNO-TV, Tom Tichenor, who created the puppets for the Broadway musical, Carnival, and is one of the best puppeteers in America. In addition to the puppets we already had, Mr. Tichenor donated two new creations: a young lion called Poncey D. Lion, and a dwarf called Troilus, the Train Loving Troll.

Much of the success of All Aboard can be attributed directly to these beautiful puppets and to a high school student, John MacDonald, who was chosen to work them.

Puppets with Personalities

An understanding of the respective personalities of Poncey and Troilus is essential to an understanding of the essence of All Aboard with Mr. Be. Troilus, the Train Loving Troll, is saturnine, gruff, practical, suspicious, phlegmatic, defensive, and relatively set in his ways. Since his youth under the bridge over which the billy goats trotted, he has become familiar with the world and he thinks he has come to terms with it. Poncey, on the other hand, has no past. He is all future. He is finding out things. Poncey D. Lion is curious, energetic, impulsive, highly emotional, vulnerable, fearful, and creative. Troilus is mechanically-inclined and is fond of trains. Poncey loves Mozart, Shakespeare, poetry, and pineapple pie. It is important to note that both are wary of dentists, policemen, doctors, shadows, and snakes, although Troilus is last to admit it. Mr. Be's function is to dispel any fears and balance their friendship. It is a cliche to claim that, in time, the puppet becomes human, but there have been instances during the production of All Aboard when a floor director has innocently cued the puppets rather than the puppeteer. For my own part, I always believed they were real.

We wanted to open and close All Aboard with a film showing Mr. Be in the cab of a real steam engine. We would then dissolve to the "Wonder Train" revolving in the studio. We had tentatively decided upon filming this standard open and close on a small train in our local zoo. However, our producer-director, Holden Potter, noticed in the newspaper that the authentic and celebrated Civil War train, "The General," was to be in Brownsville, Tennessee on a Sunday and it was taking passengers to Memphis. Our film director, Bernard Mintz, and I took a bus to Brownsville and filmed "The General" and rode it back to Memphis with the footage we needed for our open and close.

A record in the station's collection contained a medieval composition which was perfect for our theme music;

however, although the music was well within the public domain, the performance of it was not. We therefore arranged for musicians from Memphis State University to come to the studio and record the music for us. When we made the sound track for the final film, we combined the music, railroad sounds from our sound effect file, and an additional effect--a low whistle produced by blowing across the top of a soft drink bottle partially filled with water.

We were developing an attractive format for the series, but we were also attending to its content. Suggestions for program subjects were given to us by Mrs. Rose Woolner, our educational consultant. Mrs. Woolner is director of the kindergarten at Memphis State University and past president of the Tennessee Association on Children Under Six. The World Book and the Childcraft volumes were excellent sources of ideas, and we wrote to various publishers requesting permission to read from their books. My wife and I wrote original stories and I ghostwrote poems for Poncey D. Lion to recite.

Most of the graphics used to illustrate the stories and instruction on All Aboard were made by our art director, Jay Ehrlicher and graphic artist, Emelene Russell. Illustrations for the earliest programs were made by a graphics class of the Memphis State Art Department.

Each program had as its theme a single subject such as acrobats, cows, museums, stars, policemen, or poems, and we approached that subject in several ways. A program on kites, for instance, featured a haiku about kites written by a small boy, an original story about a Chinese boy and his kite, a film in which Mr. Be learned to fly a kite, and the construction of a kite in the studio. Our fullest programs were composed of a film, a story, a poem, a drawing, and a set made for that particular program. We also invited guests to the depot. A neighbor called Miss Eunice, played by Eunice Oates, came by to sing for us; we were hosts to a barbershop quartet, a woolie monkey, an expert on Indians, a potter, a magician, a dentist, a pianist, a jazz combo, a tennis player, singers, dancers, and actors, and various dogs and cats and rabbits and birds.

Specimen Program

Of course, not all of the programs utilized all of the possible elements. To illustrate our approach to a given theme, let me describe a program which had as its theme the five senses.

The "Wonder Train" is turning and Mr. Be is waving from the cab. The train stops and Mr. Be greets the children and asks them if they know that they have detectives working for them every day. A detective is someone who looks for clues and finds out things. The detectives of the children are their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and touch. Mr. Be leaves the cab and walks to the depot porch, but on the way, he gives his detectives a workout. He rings the bell, touches the train, looks at the day, and smells the air.

Poncey D. Lion is in the ticket window. Mr. Be tells him the idea about detectives and demonstrates the principle on a rose. Poncey is inspired and writes a poem on the spot:

ALL OF MY DETECTIVES

All of my detectives
have been working on the rose:
my eyes are full of petals--
there is sweetness in my nose.

My ears are slightly jealous.
They can't see or smell or touch
and the noise of roses growing
does not amount to much.

But my nose is in hog heaven.
There's celebration in my eyes,
and so the thorns won't wound me
My paw is careful where it lies.

My tongue wants rose for breakfast--
O, what a flowery diet!
But unless you're fond of daisies,
I don't suggest you try it.

All of my detectives
Have been working on the rose:
my eyes are full of petals--
there is sweetness in my nose.

Inside the depot, Mr. Be tries out his senses. Sound effect records are played and he hears a wind around the house, a large clock ticking, a man laughing, a circus, and a nightingale. Mr. Be compares his eyes to large grapes or small hardboiled eggs in his head. Through the use of slides, and objects in the depot, he uses those miraculous grapes or eggs to see a mountain or a lantern, a soldier on a horse or a wagon wheel, a church through trees or a broken clock, a water buffalo or a unicorn, a statue or a rocking chair, a forest or a young lion.

Poncey has appeared. He joins Mr. Be to try out their tongue detectives on sugar, salt, and a lemon which puckers their lips. Their nose detectives are exercised by a rose, perfume, a piece of chalk, and a spring day. Then Poncey and Mr. Be test their touch detectives by blindfolding themselves in an attempt to identify familiar objects by touch alone.

Before leaving on the "Wonder Train," Mr. Be repeats the detective simile using the rose. Suddenly Poncey realizes that he and Mr. Be have made a mistake in assuming that a rose is noiseless. Roses do indeed make a sound when they are blown by the wind.

This program on the five senses is in some ways atypical. There was no film, story, guest, or special set, but this description should suggest some of the aims of All Aboard with Mr. Be. We wanted to encourage associative thinking in the child and nourish his natural talent for simile and metaphor. Children say "as quiet as cutting cotton," or "as quiet as a splinter comes in," or "as slow as one man building a bridge." It is essential that they preserve this vivid aspect of language and thought.

Language is the element which has interested me most in the All Aboard series. I once heard a painter friend ask his little boy what sounds were made in the jungle of modern art. The boy said, "PEECASSO! PEECASSE! MEEROW! MEEROW! BRAAAK! BRAAAK! GORKEEE! GORKEEE! PEEECASSO! PEEECASSO!" The names of the great painters sounded like a chorus of jungle birds! I borrowed this funny word game and painless art lesson and used it with Poncey and Troilus, and it became a regular device on subsequent programs.

Area, Time, and Audience

All Aboard serves the area known as the mid-south. Our Class B coverage extends to a radius of fifty-two miles, but broadcasts are received by communities outside this circle. The programs have been circulated to WDCN-TV in Nashville, Tennessee, KOAC-TV in Corvallis, Oregon, and to KOAP-TV in Portland, Oregon.

The series is directed mainly to five year olds, but we have received many reports of two year olds watching Mr. Be regularly. An eight year old boy wrote to WKNO-TV and said, "I like the things you talk about and I like the trains. I am in the third grade." The age spectrum is very wide, and it has been estimated that our audience is between 35,000 and 50,000 viewers in the Memphis area.

The programs have all been videotaped and the series is complete. All Aboard is shown on a re-run basis and is seen twice daily on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and three times daily on Mondays and Thursdays at 12:00 noon, at 3:00 p.m. and at 7:00 p.m. Many day schools and kindergartens watch the programs, and it is seen by some first grade classes throughout the city.

The children do not need any special material while viewing the programs, although they are often asked to draw with Mr. Be if they have some paper and a crayon or pencil handy. There is no follow-up provided for parents or teachers.

Local Endorsement

All Aboard with Mr. Be was produced with the aid of an annual grant from the Junior League of Memphis. The League partially underwrote the series and contributed volunteer workers to assist in the production. Each program involved the central character, the puppeteer, occasional guests, at least two cameramen, a floor director, a switcher, a producer-director, a film director, an audio-announcer, the art department, a video engineer, scene designer, and the office staff.

All Aboard has been very successful in this area; it has received enthusiastic endorsement from critics, teachers, parents, and children. One of my favorite letters came from a mother whose little boy had seen a program of ours about Mozart. The program was called, "What a Wonder Boy was Mozart!" and was directed by Harvey Dice. Mr. Be and Poncey are enjoying "Don Giovanni" over the radio when Troilus appears and complains that all he ever hears is Mozart! Mozart! Mozart! Troilus does not like Mozart and claims to have a nephew who can write better music. It is quite clear that Troilus needs to know more about Mozart, so Mr. Be tells the story of Mozart's life, Poncey writes a play based on the story, and Mr. Be takes Troilus on the

"Wonder Train" to see a Mozart piano recital. Troilus is convinced and calls Mozart his "wonder boy!"

The mother wrote: "Dear Mr. Bates, I am the lady who called you last week inquiring about the name of the Mozart sonata that was played on one of your wonderful programs. My little boy, Bradley, age 7, wants a record of this sonata as a result of that particular show. He also made me look up Mozart's life history and read it to him. See how beautifully you 'inspire,' as Poncey says, these little minds?"

Representative Programs

"The Steam Machine and the Passenger Train".--Mr. Be demonstrates with a home-made steam machine the way in which steam is able to move a train. He explains the difference between freight and passenger trains. He shows the parts of a Civil War train, THE GENERAL, and describes to Poncey a trip upon a modern diesel passenger train.

"What Tells Us How Long? What Tells Us When?"--Mr. Be explains how clocks tell "when" and "how long" and that people used to tell time by the sun and the moon. He shows the children an hourglass and demonstrates how to make a clock out of a plate.

"What Eats Worms, Seeds, Bugs, Berries, and Flies"--After Mr. Be has fed Zeke, the zebra finch, he shows a film of a visit he has made to the birdhouse at the zoo. Poncey proves an elephant cannot fly and recites a poem about the multiplicity of birds.

"Howdy Stranger! Poncey Goes West, Young Lion".--Much to Poncey's surprise, Mr. Be appears bedecked in the attire of a cowboy. He explains why cowboys wear chaps, lariats and kerchiefs, and how they round up cattle and what they do for fun.

"Something's Fishy at the Depot."--Mr. Be wants to know who has two ears, whiskers, four legs, a tail and likes to eat fish for breakfast. Poncey knows the answer is a cat, but makes a big production out of solving Mr. Be's riddle. Mr. Be tells an original story about "Black Tom" and Poncey wants a real kitten to care for. Mr. Be grants Poncey's wish with a phone call to Catalina Island off the coast of Southern California, and two kittens arrive at the depot.

"Look for a World! Look for a Star! Japan!"--A lovely Japanese lady visits the depot. She teaches Mr. Be and the children some Japanese words, recites a haiku and shows how to make paper animals. Mr. Be tells the story of

"Peachling," a Japanese boy who outwitted a dragon.

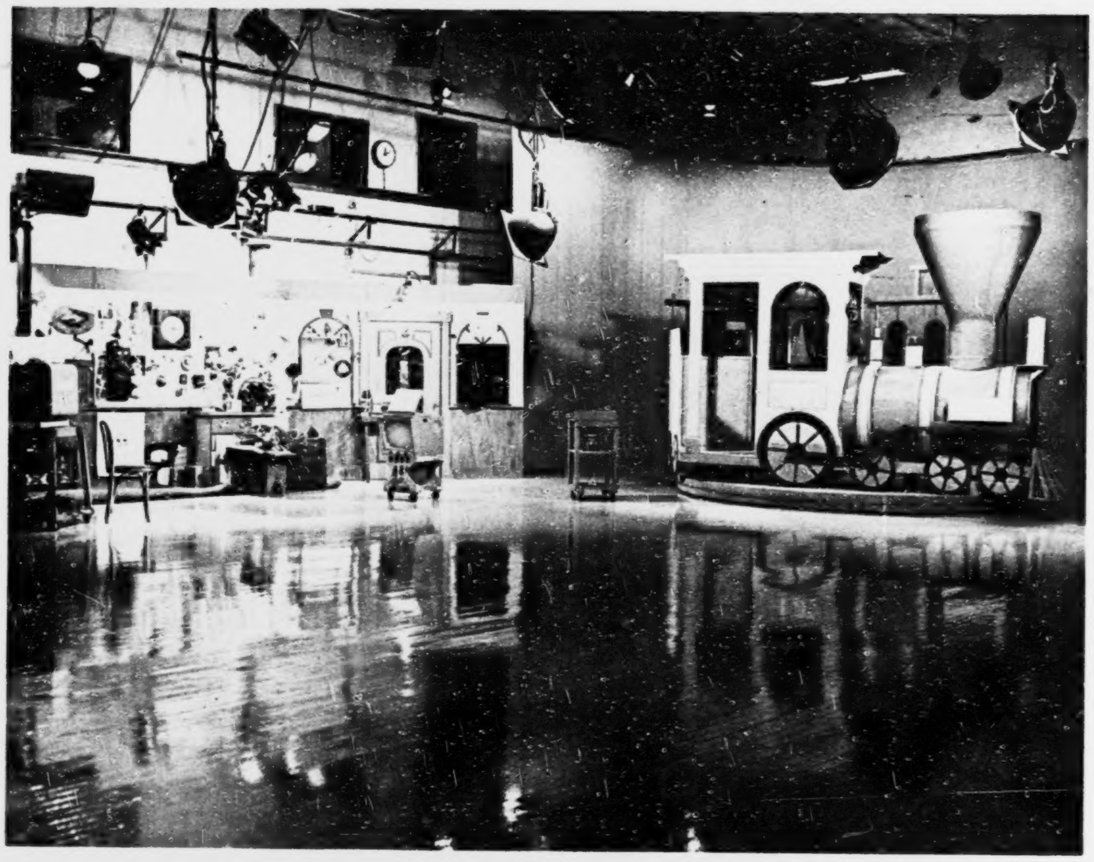
"Who Has Seen the Wind? Neither You Nor I!"--Mr. Be tries to mediate a disagreement between Poncey and Troilus by quoting Rossetti's poem. After learning some facts about air that moves, the three friends play "Trees in the Wind."

"The Bells Let Us Know and Wake Us Up!"--Poncey and Mr. Be experiment with bells--cow bells, ship bells, alarm clock bells and church bells. Poncey decides his favorite bell is the one which the ice cream man rings.

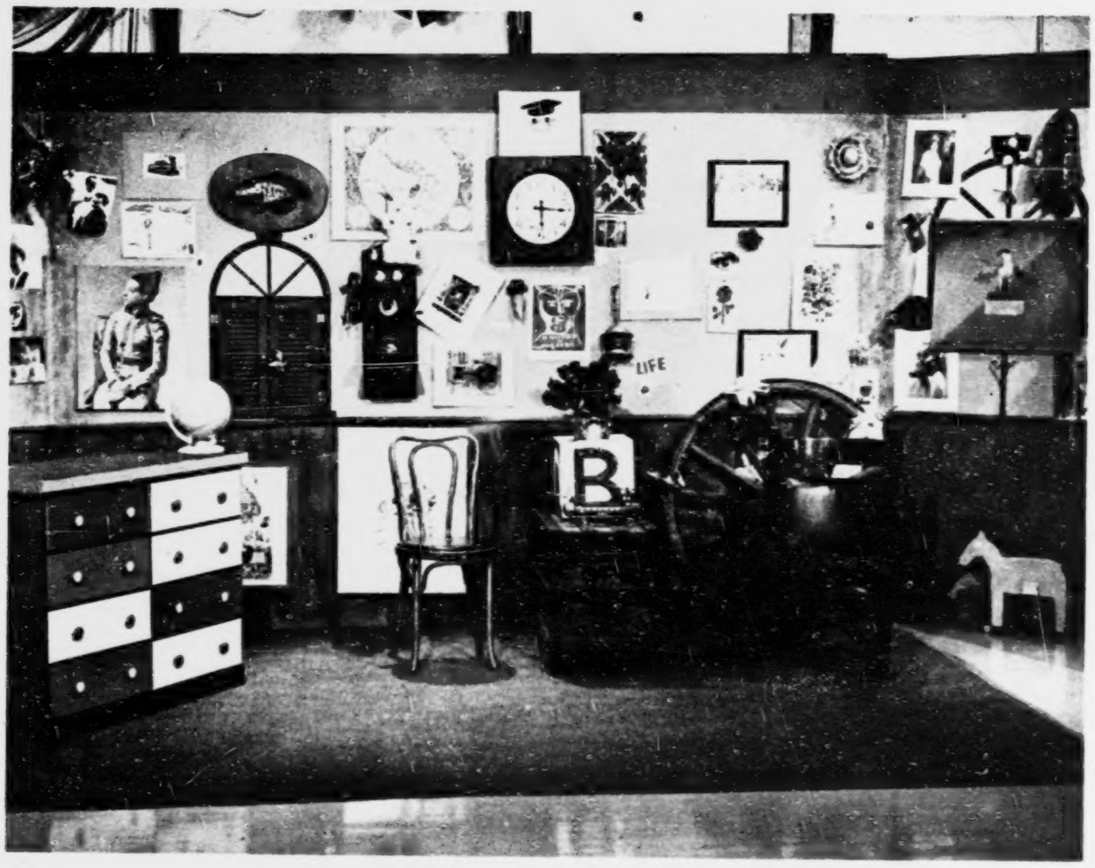
"Has Anyone Seen My Ears?"--Mr. Be has lost his ears and can't find them anywhere. Poncey can't believe his ears when he hears Mr. Be say that he has lost them. But Mr. Be is not talking about human ears. He has lost the kind of ears which grow in the fields. It is a food which is harvested in the fall, and Poncey learns the parts of the plant and its uses. Poncey sees a film about feeding on the farm and Mr. Be pops some of the food to celebrate.

"He Lives on an Island and Jumps Quite a Lot!"--Poncey is frightened because he thinks he has seen an animal with two heads. Mr. Be draws Poncey's version of the mysterious animal, and Mr. Be guesses that it must have been a kangaroo. Poncey sees a film about a wallaby and Mr. Be draws a real kangaroo. The animal which Poncey saw was not a kangaroo, however. It was the CULPRIT in disguise!

All Aboard with Mr. Be. Mr. Be (Allen Bates) holds Poncey D. Lion, a sophisticated puppet who reflects on the good things in a child's life (and of a puppet's, too). Poncey travels far and wide on a make-believe train. (WKNO-TV, Memphis)



Set for the adventures of Mr. Be. Guests are interviewed in area to left. Simulated train rotates on platform at ~~left~~ right. (WKNO-TV, Memphis)



Close-up of interview area. The roving TV camera dissects the complex background. A picture of Sigmund Freud is on the far right. (WKNO-TV, Memphis)

WQED KINDERGARTEN

A Preschool Children's Series Produced and Telecast by WQED, Pittsburgh, and Utilized by the Eastern Educational (Television) Network

Donald V. Taverner, President
Metropolitan Pittsburgh Educational Television

History and Educational Objectives

The preschool children's series, WQED Kindergarten, came into being with the school year 1962-63, as the result of recognition that many preschool youngsters were being denied the recognized advantages of kindergarten-type education because of the number of school districts in Western Pennsylvania which offer no formal kindergarten program. To this recognition was added further concern over the fact that neither commercial or educational television were generally offering the three to six year old child significant television programming.

The series, mounted around a fully qualified, experienced kindergarten teacher with the proper "chemistry" and personality to teach and to motivate children via television, was and is designed to teach and motivate the preschool child in his home, using "mother participation" on occasion, but not predicated on the participation of the parent in order to make the experience meaningful to the child. Thus, the series automatically involved active participation, mentally and physically, by the viewing child.

In the development of the programs, serious concern is always given to the educational process of bringing interest and beginning skills in early curriculum concerns and learning processes. Consequently, while the viewing child sees the program as "fun" or entertaining, actually it is formally educational in nature, and, hopefully, educational in result.

Geographical Area Served

WQED Kindergarten, as telecast by WQED, is viewed in homes, and in some schools, in ten counties of western Pennsylvania, two counties in West Virginia, and one county in Ohio. Since 1963, it has been supplied to and telecast by the eighteen stations of the Eastern Educational (Television) Network, serving the states of New England, New York, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia and West Virginia, as well as distribution to WTTW, Chicago, and KQED, San Francisco.

Target Audience

While the series is aimed at the small child as we generally find him in characteristics, recognition is given to the fact that the program may be of particular value to the child in the so-called disadvantaged home, where the experience may be an unusual one, and where neither monies nor motivation to purchase materials, etc., is present. As to age, the programs are designed for the four and five year old. While we know it is religiously viewed by numbers of three year olds and some six year olds, it is expected that it may be a little mature for many three year olds, and immature for many six year olds.

Broadcast Hour

The series is broadcast three times each week, usually (as in Pittsburgh) Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 5:00 p.m. In Pittsburgh, we normally repeat programs on Tuesday and Wednesday. It is our opinion that it would be best if the series ran every day, Monday through Friday. However, both financial considerations and the fact that five days of production in the preschool area would "rob" other program area needs within our limited production time available, force us to remain within the present limit of three times each week.

Program Format and Set Design

As to format, we find that the very most important item must be the "teacher." All else in the way of visuals, techniques, guests, etc., are of little value if the teacher is not "all" with the viewing child. Children are not, normally, brought into the studio to become a class or an audience for participation in the program, since we wish each viewing child to feel that "his teacher" is giving him her full concern, interest and attention. That this actually "works" is proven by the hundreds of simple little letters, pieces of art work and handicraft sent to the television teacher by her viewing pupils--usually unsolicited.

Since small children expect and find security in an environment consistently available to them, the set for the series is well-planned and constructed, and generally remains the same, at least by school year. Decorative changes within the set are made in keeping with the season, or with the content of the lessons under way. Program content is prepared in logical sequence designed to cover the educational or sociological matter under coverage at the time.

Occasional visitors are used in the series, but we have found that the children wish to relate to their "teacher" and, generally, feel that there is just no one in the world, except papa and mama, who comes anywhere near being as good as "Miss Jordan" or "Mrs. Cunningham." Full use of proper resources is made, as are good and carefully-considered visuals and production techniques. Film clips are used when of value. Filmed field visits are quite common, and plenty of music is in order. Original songs are written, played, and sung. Simple art plays its proper role, but, again, I would point out that much of the success of the series is enabling the child to actively participate during and following the telecasts. Live animals are common in the studio during some of the programs. For instance, one program found a baby tiger, a lamb, and a fawn all in the studio at the same time as part of one lesson! (Side comment: Only the station president showed concern, and that was for his own personal safety!)

Supplementary Materials and Activities

While we have, from time to time, given consideration to making certain materials (handicraft, etc.) available, we always come back to the recognition that many of our "pupils" are in disadvantaged homes where the cost factors of ordering and paying for such stock materials can be a handicap. Therefore, the teacher uses great ingenuity in arranging for the materials the children are to use so that they are usually readily available in the home, or, in some cases, purchaseable at very little cost from "five and ten cent stores."

Each year, WQED holds an "Open House" where the children and parents may come to the station to see the facilities, the kindergarten set, and to actually meet and visit with the teacher, her piano player, assistants, etc. Last March, at such an Open House, 7,000 parents and children came over a two-day period.

Personnel

From 1962 to 1965, Miss Francis Jordan, an outstanding kindergarten teacher of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, was our teacher on WQED Kindergarten. Her work was outstanding and was nationally recognized. Miss Jordan had to leave us this year to undertake further studies in this field at the University of Iowa. She has been replaced by Mrs. Sally Cunningham, also an outstanding Pittsburgh kindergarten teacher of over a quarter century experience in the preschool field. Now that Mrs. Cunningham has had nearly a semester of experience with the series, it is being withdrawn, temporarily, from Eastern Educational Network distribution in order that we may reevaluate and systematically obtain reaction, etc., from the educators, parents, and stations in the other areas served. Following this reevaluation, the series will then be reentered in the Network service, with whatever changes seem to be in order. This is a common practice here at WQED.

It is important to know that our kindergarten teacher, and all of our other instructional television teachers, come to us on formal leave from their school systems, and spend full time for the academic year in their television work with WQED. This is not a shared or release time arrangement.

The WQED Kindergarten teacher is supported by an assistant to help with research, materials acquisition, etc.; a musical assistant for the writing of original music, piano and other instrument assistance; a producer; a director; a full television floor crew; and from two to five studio cameras.

Production and Availability of the Series

The programs are videotaped for the repeat at WQED and for distribution to the Eastern Educational Network. Unfortunately, the large amounts of tape required and the high cost of such quantity of tape makes it impossible for us to hold the programs in library form, and they are normally not available, as previously run, at the close of a semester.

The programs are produced anew each year, and the success or difficulties of previous programs are considered. Therefore, each succeeding year does not bring a repeat of the programs previously used.

Budget and Funding

As to budget, in terms of normal ETV operations and productions, this is not an inexpensive series. The actual costs for the year to WQED to produce and telecast the series are about $54,000, with actual "out-of-pocket" costs about $36,000. We make no charge to the Eastern Educational Network or its affiliated stations for their use of the series, but EEN does provide some of the costs for tape and "dubbing" of the series.

No special provision has been made for the funding of the series, and WQED funds it from its normal operating budgets. While opportunity has occasionally arisen for a firm to provide a grant to fund the program, we have felt that we wish to avoid any alliance which might have an influence of some negative nature on the educational value of the series. We do feel that good foundation funding could enable us to refine the series and to do more than we are now able to accomplish.

Evaluation of and Future Plans for the Series

In order that the series, and each program, remain consistently sound, educationally, the entire preparation, production, teaching, and telecasting functions are under the general advisory function of a WQED Kindergarten Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of practicing kindergarten teachers in the area and recognized child guidance authorities. It meets regularly with the television teacher, the producer, and the director to critique and to propose changes in approach, etc. The letter comment of both parents and "pupils" is always reviewed seriously by the teacher and staff.

This series continually undergoes evaluation by both educational authorities and our own personnel. We receive many letters from not only our own area, but also from the many areas being served by the Eastern Educational Network stations. These letters are from educators, parents, and from children. While we are naturally pleased that the great majority of such letters and comment are highly complimentary, those that are critical receive special attention in order to determine the validity of the criticism and to bring about correction.

While the process of evaluation and refinement goes on, we recognize the value, if not real need, of a true study, in depth, of the series and its results. It is our hope that both the time and the funds can be found in the future to enable such a study.

The recent legislation and activity in relation to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the Office of Economic Opportunity does provide real potential in relation to WQED Kindergarten and similar endeavors. We at WQED have interests beyond and in addition to our present WQED Kindergarten series. Pittsburgh in located in Appalachia and we have several projects under development with the proper local, state and federal agencies in the area of the preschool child as well as functional adult illiteracy, etc. However, we are actively exploring a relationship in regard to the kindergarten series. It should be stated that, with or without regard for specialized needs in disadvantaged areas, a good preschool child series--or more--is one of the more important and significant contributions educational television can provide.

We take satisfaction in the results, although we know they can be improved. Our original objective to fill the gap left in our own area by the absence of sufficient numbers of formal kindergarten classrooms has been met.

Moreover, and probably more important, preschool children throughout the northeast and in the Chicago and San Francisco areas have benefited from the endeavor. We shall continue and hopefully improve our effort, and would express the hope that similar--and better--preschool educational television endeavors will be developed and utilized in many other areas of the nation.

Miss Francis Jordan pioneered the preschool series for WQED-TV. She presently is on leave completing her graduate degree. Although children do not participate directly on the program, contributions from viewers are an integral part of the series. (WQED-TV, Pittsburgh)

5
WQED
13
NOVEMBER

Mrs. Sally Cunningham introduces concepts of the farm to preschool children in Pittsburgh. (WQED-TV, Pittsburgh)

KINDERGARTEN AT CHOLLA'S CORNER

Doris Hubner
Television Teacher, KTPS
Tacoma Public Schools
Tacoma, Washington

My name is Cholla, pronounced "Choy-ya." I was born in Tucson, Arizona, in June, 1961. I am a black and white deer Chihuahua dog. I weigh five and one-half pounds, which is really a lot for a Chihuahua dog, but not nearly as much as a kindergarten girl or boy.

I came to Tacoma, Washington, via the San Diego Zoo and Disneyland. My family carried me in a Mexican straw purse on this journey. The purse made a good bed in which to sleep (you see, at that time I only weighed eighteen ounces).

Arriving in Tacoma, Washington, I soon learned it was to be my good fortune to become a television dog, that is, to be a helper on educational television. Being a television dog is really quite simple. You get dressed in some costume such as an Indian suit, a Santa Claus suit, a Johnny Appleseed costume, or I might be inside a thirty-five pound pumpkin and there I wait. Some kindergarten music comes on and the song is bouncy and peppy. It is called "Together" and it goes, in part, something like this:

> Together, together.
> Together everyday.
> Together, together,
> We share our work and play.

While this song is being heard and sung by the viewing audience, the cameras, which are operated by students at the Vocational-Technical Institute of the Tacoma Public Schools are showing my house, my garden, my mailbox, my circus tent bed, and me. They even show Mrs. Doris Hubner sometimes. She helps me with the whole program. There is a producer-writer, Mr. Urban Hjarne, who assists, too. And Mr. Larry Antonette, the graphic artist, makes our background scenes. The director, Mr. Richard McDonald, is busy in the control room instructing the students which shots to take. He has good eyes because he always catches me when I'm napping, or when my friends do interesting things. Then my friend Mrs. Hubner says, "welcome to Cholla's Corner," because she wants all the kindergarten boys and girls in the KTPS, Channel 62, and the KCTS, Channel 9, viewing area to see all my friends who come to visit. There is something they call a schedule for viewing that is like this:

KTPS, Channel 62:

Monday, 10:00 a.m. (live), 1:00 p.m., and
7:00 p.m. (tape)
Wednesday, 10:25 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. (tape)

KCTS, Channel 9:

Friday, 9:15 a.m., 12:10 p.m., and 1:20 p.m.
(tape)

Because we do the program "live" on Monday morning, it is a very busy time. It is sort of like Piccadilly Circus in London at times. Friends, old and new, are coming with cages and boxes, some with smiles and some without smiles. For instance, there is Mr. Norman Winnick, Director of the Point Defiance Zoo. He is a fine chap (that's what he calls me sometimes) and I get a little frustrated with him because here he comes flying in each Monday with a cage. In it is always some zoo animal. Some of them smell bad, some make funny noises, some curl up like balls, and some want to fight. Those are really the ones that make me growl. I really like Mr. Winnick, but I do wish he'd just talk about his animals and let it go at that, but Mrs. Hubner thinks young girls and boys should experience things first hand, so guests we will have, it seems. The hummingbird and her nest with two babies was wonderful to see. Mr. Winnick even fed the babies with a medicine dropper. What big mouths they had! I liked the fox because he was really foxy and awfully sly. I kept my eye on him all the time he was visiting us. Then, there was the beaver and he kept slapping his tail at the camera. The two weasels were funny. One was dark and one was white, and they got in a big fight and Mrs. Hubner said they had better go to nursery school or kindergarten to learn how to get along with their friends. Sometimes Mr. Winnick has the animals in the cage, but when he brought Chickie Doo, the fluffy white rooster with a crimson red comb, he just held him on his lap and Chickie Doo could do his tricks. Do you know what he could do? He laid upside down in Mr. Winnick's hand and that funny rooster pretended he was dead! His head hung limp and so did his wings and his feet! He was fun to have as a guest and Chickie Doo made the children laugh.

Other guests at Cholla's Corner include the puppet friends. Willie Wonder comes often to visit. He went to Europe last summer with Mrs. Hubner. He visited nursery schools and kindergartens in eleven European countries so he always has a lot of things to show and tell the girls and boys. Do you know what happened to Willie Wonder in Norway? You'd never guess. He didn't listen to the tour director so he didn't know when it was time to fly home and Willie Wonder missed the plane. He had to fly home alone and he was almost late for school. Think of that! Willie Wonder is always in big trouble, it seems. The doctor comes down Friendly Street sometimes and he checks Willie Wonder. Once he needed a booster shot and the doctor gave it to him. The doctor checks his tonsils and even taps on his knee with his hammer and that makes Willie Wonder's knee pop up and at that the doctor says, "ah ha! fit as a fiddle, Willie." The doctor talks to the viewing audience about going to the doctor, keeping neat and clean, eating good food, getting plenty of rest, and washing hands before eating and all such things.

Then, there was the time I was really embarrassed. Mrs. Hubner talked about cleanliness and bathing and all. Then she gave me a dry bath right on television in front of all the children! I could have crawled right inside the mailbox but she dried me with a fluffy, big towel and I did feel good. Think of that! Other puppet friends are the squirrel, the owl, the horse, the monkey, the rooster, the hen, the big duck, the little duck, the fix-up, paint-up, clean-up Dutch boy puppets, the foxes, and the hand carved wooden horse from Switzerland. This horse has knee joints, ankle joints, and he moves like he's all made of hinges. He tips his head and steps lively all around. He reminds

Mrs. Hubner of a poem called "Hinges," and she invites this viewing audience to say this little poem with her. It goes like this:

I'm all made of hinges,
And everything bends,
From the top of my head,
Way down to my ends.
Hinges in front, to the side, and the back,
I have to have hinges or else I would CRACK!

Then there is the English bobby policeman, the German policeman, and the American homemade policeman puppet. They make quite a fuss talking about safety to and from school, safety, safety, safety! They want kindergarten children to be very careful on the streets. They even sing songs about safety, about the traffic, and about the policeman. The old witch puppet from Austria came at Halloween time but she was really quite friendly, although she looked very ugly. Mrs. Hubner told the children she was only for fun and "to pretend" that Halloween fun. My most favorite puppet is Cyclops, an eight-foot dragon. He is awfully slow, but rather wise and solemn. Do you know what he does when he comes to call? He thinks he's a scientist or a chemist or something like that and he whispers secrets in Mrs. Hubner's ear, but she reminds him that this is rude, but he always forgets and has to be reminded each week that he must not whisper secrets. He always has surprises in the mailbox and when Mrs. Hubner looks inside there might be an experiment to do. One cold day when it was like winter with snow all over the mailbox and snow all over my house, and br-r-r, it was freezing, Cyclops brought vinegar, water, soda, and mothballs. Mrs. Hubner filled a fish bowl half full of water, measured and added two cups of vinegar, six tablespoons of soda and then swoosh--it was frothing all over! It looked like a snowstorm. After it quit foaming ten mothballs were dropped in the solution and you should have seen the "chemical reaction," dancing mothballs that looked like real snowballs! Mrs. Hubner suggests that the girls and boys should try the experiments. Sometimes they do them at school and many children also do these at home. Sometimes Cyclops has magnets, all shapes and sizes, which he uses for experiments. Magnifying glasses, prisms to make color rainbows, sponges from the sea, coconuts in the hard outer shell, brazil nuts in their outer shell. Children can listen to the rattle of the twelve brazil nuts safely hidden inside. Then there is the apple cutter that slices an apple in eight parts, or the apple cutter that cuts an apple in twelve parts. That Cyclops was so many treasures to share!

The brick garden wall beside my house is a fine spot to meet special friends. Nearly every week two kindergarten children are brought by their parents from a school, to be helpers at Cholla's Corner. They show pictures that they have painted that illustrate a song we all sing together, or may be they will paint pictures to illustrate a story for television. Sometimes children make pictures to tell a story on a flannelboard. The children surprise us with the good work they do. Occasionally, they play tricks on the viewing audience by making life-size Santa Claus pictures, gingerbread boys, jack-o-lanterns or turkeys, and the girls and boys stand behind these pictures. After the audience sees them the children step away from the pictures and surprise their friends. I can never tell what is going to happen--there is always an air of suspense and mystery about my corner but it is fun to live there.

Neighborhood friends and community helpers come to call at the brick wall, too. The bus driver shows us his cap, his uniform, and the equipment he uses to help him in his work. The bus driver brought his lunch in a paper bag and showed the children that he also eats the 1-2-3-4 Way by taking carrots, celery, apple, milk, and a peanut butter sandwich in his lunch sack. The real policeman told us he was our good friend and helper. His uniform was exciting to see, as was the fireman's uniform and his fire fighting equipment. I hid my head in my circus tent house when I saw the fireman's sharp axe. The cowboy, a real one, came with his boots, lariat, and all his attire. He reminded the boys and girls that they had to eat good food, drink plenty of milk, go to bed early in order to grow up to become a big, strong cowboy. I guess cowboys need to be big and strong to do all their work. Like Mrs. Hubner always says, "Eat the 1-2-3-4 Way and get plenty of rest so you are not a whiney."

Birthdays are special, too, at Cholla's Corner. We try to remember some important ones such as Johnny Appleseed (I guess that's because we live in Washington State, the apple state), Froebel, the father of Kindergarten, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Florence Nightingale, Edison, and such famous people. We use the calendar occasionally and then we can see when these birthdays occur. We might even sing "Happy Birthday" to all of our viewing friends who have a January birthday, a February birthday, and so on. Last June we celebrated my fourth birthday by inviting a St. Bernard dog to join me. He sort of forgot his manners and gobbled up my whipped cream banana cake, candles, whipped cream and all in about three bites! Luckily, we had made a birthday wish and had blown out the candles before my guest gobbled it up. One just never knows what will happen next at my corner. But Mrs. Hubner says anticipation is half of the fun.

When we have finished taping the lesson Monday morning, Mrs. Hubner and I pack up a few things from the morning program and go out to visit a kindergarten class. My work still isn't finished. I must help show some things used in the morning program, or I must show the children a few simple tricks I learned when I went to school. You see, I didn't go to kindergarten for children, but I attended "Obedience School for Dogs." Mrs. Hubner helps me show the children how important it is to listen, to follow directions, and to use my eyes to see. I shake out my wiggles and stretch at stretch time. She shows the boys and girls how I button my coat and keep dry by wearing a raincost, and all such things. Our days are fun. It is interesting to see what boys and girls liked best about their television lesson. I am rather self-conscious, sometimes, because no matter what fine things are on the lesson, they usually all say, "We like Cholla best." I try to look the other way when they say that, but then next week I work real hard again to do things so they will want to visit my corner every week. In the classroom they sing the songs we had on television and talk about the stories, the experiments, and

Mrs. Hubner finds out first hand from the children what was most worthwhile as a learning experience. She knows almost immediately what they gained from the lesson and they give her very pertinent information about how well they absorbed the material. She tells them that she covers a lot in her lesson so that they will learn a lot but they must also pay attention every minute. She has them do stretch games together, so they don't get too tired during the twenty minutes on the air. Guess I am really glad that I am a Chihuahua instead of a boy or girl. They really have to pay attention and think.

Then we go to nursery school meetings and talk to the teachers about what we are doing in television for kindergarten children. Many children that are not in kindergarten tune in on our program and Mrs. Hubner always asks about what they like and if they listen and all. She wants them to like it, too. We take our puppets and do puppet shows for preschool parents and teachers, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, etc., because Mrs. Hubner says parents must know what children are learning and doing. I get rather bored with all this, but then, it seems educators must educate parents in correct usage of television so that children view programs that will stimulate learning, so I go along with it. Strangely enough, the parents enjoy the puppets and me almost as much as the children do. So I shall not complain.

Actually, I am rather fortunate. While I rest and recuperate from Monday's program and from school visitations, and from preschool meetings for nursery school parents and teachers, and from Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and from kindergarten educational television workshops, it is my privilege to go along and just listen so that I understand better the needs of young children. Mrs. Hubner says we don't try to do total teaching on television, but we do try to stimulate learning for the children and provide unique enrichment experiences for children. These things must be activities or learning situations that it is not possible for the classroom teacher to provide.

Then, there is the television guide where things are outlined for the teachers in three parts. These are: (I) BEFORE THE BROADCAST ACTIVITIES, (II) BROADCAST ACTIVITIES, and (III) AFTER THE BROADCAST ACTIVITIES.

Mrs. Hubner cannot outline everything in the guide, of course, because she likes to make the program creative and to keep alert to things of the day. However, she makes many and varied suggestions for the teachers to use in making the curriculum challenging. Much time is spent by Mrs. Hubner in doing research for good material, new material, and adapting material for use on television. She collects idea from the past to make children aware of their heritage, aware of their history, and she tries to alert children to a sensitiveness of an appreciation for the world. An example would be the antique hobby horse she used on one of our Christmas programs. I had to sit on it while she told our viewing audience about the one they were seeing and then she took a book that told about old toys and showed a picture of "Boy in Plaid," having his portrait painted more than one hundred years ago, sitting by an old-fashioned hobby horse. The boy was holding a whip and wearing a plaid dress. The artist was unknown. The children could all see the picture very clearly, they could see the strong springs that made the hobby horse move, and she hoped it motivated them to look in their attics at home or at grandmother's for similar old toys. They also learned that small boys used to dress very differently long ago, too. One mother of a preschool listener called and told Mrs. Hubner all about their hobby horse, which was very old.

That reminds me of many embarrassing situations. If Mrs. Hubner and I are in the supermarket or in Seattle, or on the ferry to Victoria, B.C., often a small child will say, "Mother, Mother, there's Cholla." They don't seem to even know Mrs. Hubner and I feel foolish, but for some reason she thinks this is good. She says, "You see, Cholla, the children identify with you." Then she insists on letting them pet me. I growl, though, unless she holds me because I don't like being the center of attraction. I like it better when the children say, "Remember, Mrs. Hubner, when you showed ME the star in the little red house with no doors and no windows?" Do you know that secret? If you don't, just tune in Cholla's Corner some Monday in the autumn and find out.

You're thinking all this must cost a lot of money. Well, I guess it does, but Mrs. Hubner says, "Dr. Angelo Giaudrone, Superintendent of the Tacoma Public Schools, keeps ahead of the times and that's why we have a program planned especially for kindergarten children." There are a lot of first grade children and preschool boys and girls, and even some of the retired older set, viewing. Mrs. Hubner says this is just another tool for teaching to help the classroom teacher.

Mr. Robert Slingland, Director of Television Education in Tacoma Public Schools, works out all the finances of ETV. He works with the people at the Vocational-Technical Institute, and all the other facets for seeing to it that we have sufficient funds to operate. I guess it is quite a task, but Mr. Slingland knows all about financing ETV. Mrs. Hubner and I just work at programming for Cholla's Corner. She thinks by all cooperating and trying to do the best we can for educational television we are helping all girls and boys to learn.

Do you want to know something? We have a baby Chihuahua in our family and now he's going to come to visit our friends. Mrs. Hubner will hide him in the mailbox and Cyclops will have him for a secret. That's the way I will start the New Year! All during vacation I've been trying to educate him about the technique of television, but Mrs. Hubner says he must just be himself. I hope he doesn't disgrace us in the New Year. I'll be glad to be back at KTPS, Channel 62. During the holidays, while visiting my relatives, Mrs. Hubner and I had to put on a puppet show for all the neighborhood children in Seattle and they all came and here I was dressed up as Santa Claus and letting everyone pet me and say, "That's Cholla. We see him at school. He has a lot of friends at Cholla's Corner." I just sit there and think "Who got me into this?", and then

I see Mrs. Hubner all enthusiastic and so I reflect calmly, "Oh, well, Willie Wonder did not see ETV in Europe and now if we in the United States hope to continue the work as Froebel would have had us continue it (remember, he was the father of kindergarten), we must keep working on the committee with kindergarten teachers for planning, and working on the science committee with kindergarten teachers and a school principal, Mr. James Robertson, as advisor. By all pooling ideas and working together, Cholla's Corner can really be a child's garden, a place to learn, a place to stimulate girls and boys to discover, a place to motivate young children to want to experiment, to want to go to school, to want to go to the moon, and on and on.

And now it's time for me to chew on my chewing stick!

Mrs. Doris Hubner, television teacher at Kindergarten at Cholla's Corner, poses with Cholla, the television dog, and his friends.

Mrs. Doris Hubner talks with Cyclops, the eight-foot dragon, while Cholla looks on.

ROUNDABOUT

A TV Series for Culturally Deprived Preschool Children

Rose Mukerji and Robert D. Smith*
WETA, Channel 26
Washington, D. C.

Roundabout is a videotape television series of fifteen-minute programs developed particularly for viewing by three to five year old children living in inner cities and depressed neighborhoods. The programs are planned for preschool classroom viewing as well as for individual viewing in the home. The series is produced by WETA-TV in Washington, D.C. in cooperation with the United Planning Organization of Washington, D.C., and the Public Schools of the District of Columbia.

The overall project, which involves extensive evaluation of the series, is being conducted pursuant to contracts between WETA-TV, the program design and producing agency, and the United Planning Organization, the evaluating agency, with the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Division of Elementary-Secondary Research, under provisions of Title VII-B, National Defense Education Act.

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Objectives

The objective of using specially-designed television programs as part of the activities of preschool and day-care centers is to bring into the curriculum of the centers a large variety of experiences and activities not easily accomplished with the limited resources of the centers and to bring the children into continuing intimate contact with resource persons who could not as frequently visit all of the centers in person. The programs also provide filmed field trips to many locales and act as audiovisual previews to heighten the meaningfulness of field trips which the children of the centers may themselves take in the future.

The television programs are designed to accomplish two specific educational objectives in connection with the overall curriculum of the preschools: (1) to introduce into the daily school schedule a variety of experiences and activities which are highly desirable but could not be produced by the teachers in the classrooms with their traditional store of teaching resources, and (2) to enrich and extend, through audiovisual techniques, the daily activities in which the students regularly participate. The programs will be integrated into the preschool schedule so that they both supplement regular learning activities and introduce new elements that would be very difficult to create in a classroom context without television.

Content

The series focuses primarily on:

Science, Mathematics and Concepts.--stimulating children's curiosity about, and awareness of, their environment, using many demonstration materials that are readily available in both the classroom and low income homes.

Creative Expression.--encouraging expression through the creative arts such as music, dance, drama, puppetry, stories, and graphic arts.

A Wider World.--expanding children's horizons through filmed field trips to places in the city and the country seldom seen, such as water fronts, construction sites, community establishments and cultural centers, as well as visits on location with a wide range of people in various jobs--to underscore attitudes of appreciation and respect for them.

The Child.--candid motion pictures and still photography will show children (often members of the preschool classes) representing all ethnic groups as they face situations of fear, pain, joy, parental and peer conflict, physical disability and a variety of experiences in familiar and unfamiliar environments. The programs are open-ended and produced to elicit creative responses in the children by giving them a notion of the range of expressive behavior and interpersonal relations.

Format and Special Production Techniques

One unique feature is the on-camera sustaining character of "Jim Jeffers," a young father-uncle type who is interested in young children, who enjoys sharing ideas and events with them, and who represents a model in their own neighborhood setting. The selection of a young Negro for this role is in keeping with the intention of providing high identity value as well as a desirable model for young children living in depressed neighborhoods, many of whom belong to minority groups.

The environment for the studio programs is a large, realistic exterior of a row-type house, familiar to people who live in deteriorating sections of many cities. As in these communities, the stoop and front steps are frequently used for gatherings of neighbors and friends. In the series, Jim meets children here, they sit on the steps and join in singing with a neighbor who plays the guitar. Or this is where Jim's friend, the veterinarian, stops by to talk about Jim's kitten with him and a few children. Another part of the studio set is a basement workshop with concrete block walls, particularly useful for programs suggesting an interior environment.

Although Jim appears most of the time, some programs draw upon resource people in the community. These include teenagers with special skills in music as well as adults such as artists, dancers, folk-singers, doctors, grocery clerks, barbers, bakers, carpenters, bus drivers, etc. Some of these persons appear in films taken on location and which show them in natural working situations. Films of preschool children on field trips emphasize a child's eye view of the experience. Many of the programs also include short film clips.

In other words, the on-camera sustaining character of Jim, the familiar row house and basement, and the participating children all produce a sense of identity for the target population of disadvantaged preschool children. On one hand, some topics of the programs focus on the educational stimuli within the children's environment; others range beyond the narrow neighborhood limits to which these children are frequently confined into the richness of the wider community.

The program format attempts to involve the child viewer by using him on camera, by having him use learning materials such as those used on the program, some of which are common objects in his environment, by depicting situations with which the child closely identifies and with which he becomes emotionally involved, and by encouraging cognitive responses to situations on the screen. Some programs elicit physical response to what is seen in the form of movement and singing. The programs are designed to give him new ideas that will result in creative, imaginative, and exploratory activities and to spark discussions following the program.

Scheduling

The Roundabout series for children consists of over 50 quarter-hour programs on videotape. The first telecasts of these programs will be on WETA-TV, Channel 26, the Washington, D.C. noncommercial educational television station. While the WETA audience embraces the entire Greater Washington area, including counties deep into neighboring Virginia and Maryland, the target and test audience for the programs is the "student body" of five experimental preschool centers, operated by the Public Schools of the District of Columbia with funds supplied by the Office of Economic Opportunity, through the local anti-poverty coordinating agency, The United Planning Organization.

Originally, it was intended that four new programs would be broadcast during the week with each one being scheduled twice on the same day, once in the morning and once in the middle of the afternoon. As a result of information gained from pretesting several of the programs in the preschool centers, and in consultation with the resident project advisory committee and several of the national consultants, the playback schedule was changed. It was generally agreed that presentation of a new program every day would inhibit children's ability to utilize ideas and stimuli provided by the television series. It was decided to play back the same program on the morning and afternoon of two consecutive days to allow more time for children's responses or to give them the opportunity to see the same program or a particular part of it over again if they wished. Telecast time is now 9:30 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. In February a third telecast, 11:30 a.m., will be added to permit determination of the best time of day for television programs in preschool centers.

Teachers Roundabout

A concurrent series of 26 half-hour programs, Teachers Roundabout, guides teachers, assistants and aides of preschools in the effective use of the television programs. It previews televised materials for the following week, suggests methods of utilization, and offers in-service education in preschool teaching. It provides in-service training for those working primarily with children and their families in metropolitan poverty areas and offers useful information for parents who view it as well.

Single sheet teacher's guides are available for use with each program. They contain a brief description of the program, the focus of the content, some suggestions for follow-up utilization, and a few references for teachers and children. They are mailed, regularly, two weeks in advance to the staff of the Model School Preschools and are available on request by others. After our programs are completed, the single sheet teacher's guides will be assembled into a bound manual.

Evaluation

As the first programs were telecast on Channel 26 in Washington, early in January, 1966, the UPO team of evaluators began their observations of youngsters in the preschool centers while the programs were on the air and for periods afterwards. It is obviously too early to report any meaningful data about effects of the programs, except certain initial observations. A number of the children have commented that Jim is "talking to me" apparently referring to the well-known phenomenon that no matter where a viewer sits in the room, it appears that the on-camera speaker is looking directly at him. A number of the youngsters have already strongly identified Jim as "Daddy." Some of the rhythms Jim has introduced in early programs appear to pop up later during play periods when the children are discovered tapping out the same rhythms on chair backs or toys. Jim has visited some of the centers, and has been identified as the person on the television, and some of the children have recognized their school mates appearing in certain programs.

These early observations, along with more sophisticated data, will be gathered by the evaluating team as the project progresses through the first six months of 1966.

The production team, which includes the project director, television director and television teacher, have regularly visited the preschool centers while programs were on the air. On the basis of their observations and refined analysis of the program material and the target audience, the production team has arrived at some preliminary conclusions which affect the design and videotaping of programs now in production.

They found the need for a high degree of precision in the form and content of the stimuli approprirate for this age group. For example, great care must go into the exact language that is to be used and the clarity with which questions must be formulated. A careful balance must be maintained between simplicity of language that may be understood and closely related vocabulary intended to broaden language skills. It is also necessary, in most cases, to rely on visual stimuli to precede verbal stimuli. Also, because manipulative, tactile stimuli are primary channels for gaining information at the preschool age level, and because this source is unavailable through television, it becomes important to extend the length of time of visual stimuli beyond that generally experienced in television programs for older children.

One experimental feature of this project is the use of a non-teacher as the sustaining, on-camera figure. The positive impact of this innovation has received favorable response from those who previewed the early programs. Although some problems were anticipated in developing a person who had neither professional teaching background nor acting experience, they have proven to be more extensive than originally envisioned.

It was found necessary to spend considerable time in helping the "teacher" gain some understanding of the growth and development of preschool children as well as knowledge of appropriate curriculum goals for this age group. This is a process which must continue during the whole period of production in order to help guarantee the educational validity of the programs. Since children of preschool age are used in some of the programs, the "teacher" must be able to interact with them in ways that are consistent with good educational practice. When, because of lack of background, the "teacher" demonstrates procedures inconsistent with accepted principles of early childhood education, it becomes necessary to repeat that particular production.

Another experimental feature of the demonstration project is the use of preschool children as an integral part of some of the programs. There was no way of realistically anticipating how this would affect programing, but their extremely high degree of unpredictability made orderly program production hectic at times.

It has been impossible to have even a walk-through with the children in the studio, let alone any semblance of rehearsal even for camera placement. This meant that, even when some technical difficulty required that the program be started again, the children were unable to make the required adjustment. A more satisfactory way was to have two groups of children available in the studio for the same program in case it had to be interrupted in process. However, the problems attendant upon having children wait the period of time which might be involved also needed attention. Another solution attempted was to reschedule the program at another time with another group of children.

It is encouraging to note that, as the result of the first two telecasts of Teachers Roundabout programs during which announcements were made of the available Teacher's Guides, sixty-five requests, primarily from schools, but some also from individual parents, have been received by the station. The tenor of reaction from telephone responses to the programs indicate appreciation of the tempo as well as of the content of the programs for being singularly appropriate for preschool children.

Members of supervisory and research teams visit and study reactions of preschool children while Roundabout is on the air. (WETA-TV, Washington, D.C.)

"Jim Jeffers," played by Milton Rooks (right), and two young friends are visited by a veterinarian who introduces them to a kitten on Roundabout. (WETA-TV, Washington, D.C.)

Films shot on location extend the environment of the culturally deprived preschool child in the Washington, D.C. area. (WETA-TV, Washington, D.C.)

The exterior set of the Roundabout series is designed so that the preschool children in the area can experience a high degree of identification with the teacher and with the programs that are produced. (WETA-TV, Washington, D.C.)

TV KINDERGARTEN

Wayne Bundy, Ph.D.
Program Manager, KNME-TV
Albuquerque, New Mexico

and

Joyce Marron
Teacher, TV Kindergarten

Introduction

In September, 1960 TV Kindergarten began daily programing on the local educational station (Channel 5), Albuquerque, New Mexico. By May, 1966, 1140 programs had been produced and broadcast, 5 half-hour programs per week, repeated twice each day throughout 38 weeks each school year.

"Graduates" number in the thousands. Members of its first "student body" will enter sixth grade this fall. The program has become an institution in New Mexico, the southern border of Colorado, and, more recently, large sections of Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Idaho, and Illinois where the programs are received for rebroadcast locally.

TV Kindergarten's on-camera teacher--Mrs. Joyce

Marron--is identified in hundreds of homes as "my teacher" by preschoolers who "go to school" in their own living rooms and take the educational process quite as seriously as their older brothers and sisters whose school attendance is more conventional. As a TV teacher, Mrs. Marron has become New Mexico's best known woman--at least to New Mexicans between the ages of 2 and 12, their mothers, and baby-sitters.

Background and Rationale

TV Kindergarten--in its present daily format--was conceived in the winter of 1959-60 as the operational vehicle of an experimental study of the effectiveness of at-home viewing of a televised kindergarten program in preparing the preschool children for the first grade.

That such an idea should originate with an operating ETV station may be better understood against the background of KNME's unique ownership and operational pattern. Jointly licensed to the Regents of the University of New Mexico and the Board of Education of the City of Albuquerque, KNME is responsible to both and hence directly concerned with education at all levels. Its obvious responsibility has been the production and dissemination of university telecourses and public school teleclasses. However, community service and community programing of both national and local origin have been accorded equal importance.

Local topography provides an additional special ingredient. With the transmitter located at an elevation of 10,500 feet and an average ground terrain of 5,000 feet, KNME's signal is able to reach approximately 2/3 of the state from a single site. With such coverage and the University's statewide obligation, programing has always been concerned with both metropolitan and rural needs and interests.

The comprehensive plan for the 1960-61 season was designed to meet a readily apparent educational need in the New Mexican community. Like many other geographically extended but sparsely populated states, New Mexico had--and has--no statewide public school kindergarten service to prepare the preschool child for entering the first grade. There were, in some urban areas, a limited number of privately operated kindergartens then serving less than 10 percent of the five year old preschool population; seven publicly supported kindergartens in widely separated areas served an additional two percent of the pupils, a total of 12 percent in all.

The need for a publicly supported kindergarten system has long been recognized by both educators and the general public. Without preschool preparation, the greater part of the child's first year in school too often is spent in learning what school is all about. It is equally apparent that the common first year transitional problem is particularly acute in New Mexico because of the tri-linguo-cultural nature of the state. However, in view of minimum cost estimates of $7 million to establish a statewide publicly supported kindergarten system--and other even more pressing educational needs in the state--there was no possibility of establishing such a system at that time and little likelihood of such action for some time to come.

Interestingly, it had been noted in the predominantly Navajo area of the state near Gallup that, with the advent of commercial TV in that area, the transition of non-English speaking Navajo children into the first grade became easier and quicker. In view of this coincidental by-product of routine commercial programing, it appeared probable that purposeful presentation of planned material might significantly increase their linguistic readiness for school. It seemed likely that similar results might be expected from children from Spanish-speaking homes and equally likely that general language readiness of first graders without such obvious language barriers might also be improved.

Finally, experience with the local weekly kindergarten program--and observation of other programs throughout the country--suggested that many other standard kindergarten functions might well be successfully accomplished through at-home viewing of a telecast series based upon standard kindergarten objectives and procedures.

Objectives, Goals, and Aims

The purposes of TV Kindergarten today remain what they were in 1960:

1. To help satisfy the need for preschool preparation at the kindergarten level for all who desire it in a state which has no regular public school kindergarten system;
2. To perform as many standard kindergarten functions as possible through at-home viewing of broadcast presentation of systematically arranged content;
3. To develop in the viewing child significant reading, linguistic, number, and social readinesses in preparation for school; and
4. To prepare children with non-Anglo backgrounds for a new linguo-cultural situation.

Within this frame of reference, it is apparent that the educational objectives of kindergarten on television are the same as in the classroom. Basically these goals are:

1. To enrich the background of general knowledge;
2. To help the child know himself and his environment--and make a better adjustment to both; and
3. To help prepare the child for school through developing him as a person who is going to be a first grader.

To these is added in our southwestern state a special goal--to reflect the English-speaking culture to our large population of Spanish- and Indian-speaking children prior to entry into the school system.

Since TV Kindergarten content is based upon the Kindergarten Curriculum Guidebook of the State Department of Education, the series seeks to accomplish, insofar as possible within the limitations of the medium, the major aims of the kindergarten program as outlined in the Preface:

1. To safeguard the child's physical and mental health.
2. To stabilize the child's emotional status and adjust the child to the school environment.
3. To provide experience for acquiring meaningful concepts.
4. To foster readiness in all areas of learning.
5. To help the child face reality and to learn to solve his problems.
6. To bring the child through his daily contacts with children to a clearer understanding of the type of behavior that is generally acceptable.
7. To give the child a start in the development of acceptable social behavior.
8. To develop the child's aesthetic appreciation.
9. To help the child build a philosophy of living.

The Viewing Audience

In 1965-66, as in its original concept, TV Kindergarten is aimed specifically at New Mexico's more than 25,000 five year olds who will be entering first grade a year later. At least one-third of these children come from Spanish-American linguo-cultural backgrounds. Another significant group is of Pueblo, Navajo, or Apache origin and culture. As indicated, the program is intended for at-home viewing by the individual child.

However, it has been our experience that the appeal of a friendly, relaxed, preschool program seems to be considerably more catholic than would be expected from our specific intent. Mail response reports at least as many four year olds regularly in attendance, while three and four years of participation does not appear to be uncommon, with mothers reporting three and two year olds watching portions at least with interest in company with older children and absorbing a surprising amount of the material presented. At the other end of the age spectrum, there are reports of older children watching with younger ones when out of school, as well as the systematic in-school use as well.

Observation by Peace Corps trainees at remote-area sites in New Mexico revealed regular in-school use in the first and second grades as a transitional device into the Anglo linguo-cultural milieu of the schools. Further investigation has shown this to be a fairly common pattern in non-metropolitan systems. The principal value seems to lie in the fact that TV Kindergarten material eases the shift to English as a second language in that the songs and stories used possess a universal appeal and promote additional motivation. It is further noted that reference materials in common use on the program are not always available in small school districts and that arts and crafts projects are readily adaptable as schoolroom projects.

Obviously, the fact that the program is aimed at the individual child at home does not preclude its convenient use in private kindergarten and nursery schools, the only essential difference being the opportunity for group follow-up activities and projects. Experience indicates that the program is used to a considerable extent in such circumstances.

An unexpected--yet logical--use of the series has been in a variety of special education classes for the deaf, the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded. Because the programs present a low-pressure, generally enriching, yet basically simple and entertaining content in an atmosphere of friendly enquiry, these special classes find it can be used to enrich and support regular curricula.

Finally, there is another specific target audience that both teacher and producer-director consciously communicate with, an audience at least as important to the goals of the series as the primary audience of preschoolers--their mothers and teachers. Both can use TV Kindergarten as a source of ideas for enrichment of the preschooler's experiences and development. Mail response establishes that mothers do often watch with their children and are both creative enough and concerned enough to expand the child's preschool experience by enlarging upon activities begun on TV Kindergarten. To capitalize on this function, the viewing child is occasionally asked to call his mother into the room if she is not watching. Mrs. Marron then talks directly to her--suggesting ideas for helping her child develop reading, writing, or numbers readinesses, or inviting her to request such items as the check list for getting the child ready for entering school.

Out-of-state distribution has not required redefinition of the intended audience. As expected, children and their mothers are much the same wherever they live. What changes have been necessary are in details of content, and occasionally sequence, and then never to the detriment of the basic audience TV Kindergarten is committed to serve--the preschoolers of New Mexico.

Format: Design, Staging, and Content

TV Kindergarten is intended--within the limitations of the medium--to provide the closest possible equivalent to a face-to-face kindergarten experience for the child. Format, presentational style, talent, setting, content--all are determined within this frame of reference. TV Kindergarten presents a real teacher really teaching. Everything else is subordinate.

Unlike the typical children's program on television, it is systematic and progressive. It begins at a definite point and ends at another, arriving there by logical steps and a positively planned route.

Unlike the typical instructional television program, it is fun for the participating child--but fun in the way that any good kindergarten is fun, because learning is fun if the method of presentation doesn't take all the fun out of it.

Everything included in the program, everything that is suggested, everything that is said and done, is gauged to allow the child at home to attend TV Kindergarten alone--meaningfully--without requiring extra help or instruction from others. Partially as a result, and partially because of the inherent psychological audience-performer relationship in television, the teacher speaks directly to a single child--perhaps more accurately, the child. All presentational techniques and procedures are designed to enhance this "tutorial teaching" aspect of such communication, and every effort is made to maintain a one-to-one relationship--one teacher, one child. The result is a remarkable degree of direct intimate communication and the establishment of a surprising personal rapport.

In line with this approach, on the typical program only the child's teacher, Mrs. Marron, appears on-camera. Occasionally, as in any well-run classroom, a guest is invited as a special treat. Even more rarely, and for very particular purposes, children may be used within the program.

Also implicit in the general design concept of the program is its setting. Since Mrs. Marron is saying in effect, "You sit right there in your own living room and let me come to you," the set itself must say, "Here is your classroom around us." Stylized in design, it uses the techniques of selective or simplified realism. Real objects--the piano, the chairs, the desk, the blackboard--are employed for their reality and their functional utility, but abstract frame units delineate space with only the minimal "wall-ness" of a wall. Cheerful and stylized drawings have been added for decorative, mood, and compositional purposes.

The range of content is indicated by a random listing of representative program topics:

Getting Acquainted with Our Schoolroom
Fall--A Change in Season
Fire Prevention
The Numbers: 1 & 2
Religious Customs of Chanukah
Our Helper the Policeman
Setting the Table
Making Gifts for Mom and Dad
The New Year and Rhythm Sticks

The general order of organization is the basic kindergarten curriculum plan that follows month by month through the year, giving special emphasis to seasons and holidays for general interest. Specific content--stories, music, art and craft ideas, science projects, and curricular readinesses--is interwoven with this material and always centrally related to the basic seasonal theme.

Broadcast Schedule

The on-the-air schedule of TV Kindergarten has been stabilized since the 1962-63 season for KNME-TV viewers. The series always begins the day after Labor Day and ends the Friday before Memorial Day. During this 38-week period, there are no interruptions for holidays or school vacations. Each program is available twice--initially at 3:00 p.m. and repeated at 9:00 a.m. the next broadcast morning to provide additional exposure. Some parents report that their children watch both, repetition here apparently possessing some of the charm for preschoolers of the repeated story. Originally, repeat scheduling the following day rather than twice the same day was for production convenience, but the pattern is retained to allow the child who watches both to see two different programs on the same day.

Special Materials

As indicated, TV Kindergarten is intended to be a program which the individual child may watch and participate in without adult supervision. As such, each telecast program provides all essential teacher-pupil communication, and the viewing experience and participation are intended to be self-sufficient and complete in itself without the necessity for parents' or teachers' guides to complement the broadcast.

However, some specific supplementary materials giving directions for some projects and recipes for home-made supplies and materials are available upon request. In each instance, however, the information has initially been given in full on the air.

Although the viewing child can follow the broadcasts passively without special materials, he does need standard kindergarten supplies in order to participate fully. Since viewing is on an individual basis, procurement of these is also.

Early in the year, a TV Kindergarten "desk" is made on the air from a cardboard box by Mrs. Marron, and careful instructions are given the at-home pupil so he can make one of his own. Into this box (it retains a removable top so it may be used both as a desk and for storage) go crayons, scissors, paste, paper, and miscellaneous objects (paper clips, straws, etc.) that will be used repeatedly in projects. The child is instructed to have his desk with him at school each day--perhaps to store it near the TV set (if Mother says it's all right).

During the year Mrs. Marron makes paste, clay, fingerpaints, and an "easel," explaining each in detail as she does them and announcing availability of directions for the more complicated ones. Ingredients for these and the raw materials for other projects--such as simple rhythm instruments for the pupil's use--are either normally available in most homes or readily obtainable.

The program again provides its own line of communication in developing follow-up activities. For the child, many of the materials and projects he works with are intended to be self-generating with regard to follow-up in that they contain the basis for improvisation and expansion according to his own imagination. Beyond this, others are used during the program itself but with hints and suggestions of things he can do afterward, and some with specific instructions.

For example, many art activities for the viewing child would require far longer than the 10 minutes to which content units are normally limited. Mrs. Marron therefore shows how it can be done, asking the child not to try it yet, but to watch carefully and remember. And as she works, she may suggest variations, substitutions, and related things to do. The child is reminded that Mother may prefer him to do his work later in the kitchen--where cleanup is easier. Not only does the technique save program time and allow more content variety--as well as saving Mother's rugs perhaps--but it serves the very real purpose of converting a directed art activity (so loved by children of this age but apt to limit creativity) into a highly creative art experience.

For the parent and kindergarten teacher, follow-up suggestions are often implicit in the material itself or indirectly expressed in directions to the child, but on occasion direct communication is employed on the air (as noted in the discussion of audience above). Similarly, pre-paration of materials is communicated on theair.

Special Production Techniques

The outstanding production characteristic of TV

Kindergarten is the simplicity of its production techniques. Its one "gimmick" is avoidance of gimmicks. Its keynote is reality. Its principal innovation has been to return to unobstructed communication without the manifold distractions that afflict the typical children's program on TV.

This production philosophy has its roots in the observed capacity, peculiar to the camera lens in mass communication conditions, for multiple single-eye contact. Hence, if we are concerned with presentational (as opposed to representational) communication, public address mass-audience techniques become inappropriate in that speaking on television is not public speaking at all, but rather "private speaking," coincidentally heard and viewed by the public. If, instead, the television communicator truly sees and focuses on a single pair of eyes at the lens of the camera, then every pair of eyes focused on a receiver screen has the illusion of continuous personal eye contact, no matter how many pairs of eyes may be viewing in total.

Furthermore, if the communicator looking into the single pair of eyes can then personalize them, can see in her mind's eye not just a child but a particular child, then every child viewing has the illusion of being that particular child and enjoying that same highly personal relationship, the illusion of the undivided attention of his teacher for himself alone. Basking in this sensation of personal attention, he becomes not a passive observer but an active participant in the dialog or activity. Implicit then is the deliberate elimination of other children from the studio "schoolroom" with the teacher, since for her to talk to them and work with them would divide her attention and return the child at home to the role of spectator and negate television's special capacity for superpersonal communication.

If what we have to say is truly important to the child, we need not resort to anything beyond the inherent fascination of the unknown and the warm personal appeal of being talked to individually by someone who cares. It is only because we have outgrown our original wonder at the world we live in that we forget the compulsion of curiosity and the fascination of ideas and knowledge and new things to do. It is only when we have little or nothing to say that we need surface devices to get or hold attention.

Given appropriate content and an effective teacher to communicate it, the proper business of production is to keep out of the way. Its function is to provide support for her teaching without ever calling attention to itself. If it can do that, it is innovation enough.

Conclusion

It is submitted that there is not a television station in America whose community does not possess individuals with the talent and background to do meaningful children's programing at the local level. Certainly these stations--whether commercial or non-commercial--must do more than they have been if they are to fulfill their obligation to the public interest, convenience, and necessity and their commitment to broadcast programs that inform, educate, and entertain. It remains KNME's conviction that no other programing area in American television has been so sadly neglected, that no other demonstrable programing need is greater, and that in no other area is the potential so great for genuine contribution.

Certainly when TV Kindergarten was begun, it could not have been anticipated by any but the most optimistic participant that it would achieve the success it has. But management was convinced the task was worth undertaking and that significant contribution might be made in this way to education in New Mexico. Today, it is apparent that TV Kindergarten is "our most important product." Certainly it is the one in which we take the greatest satisfaction.

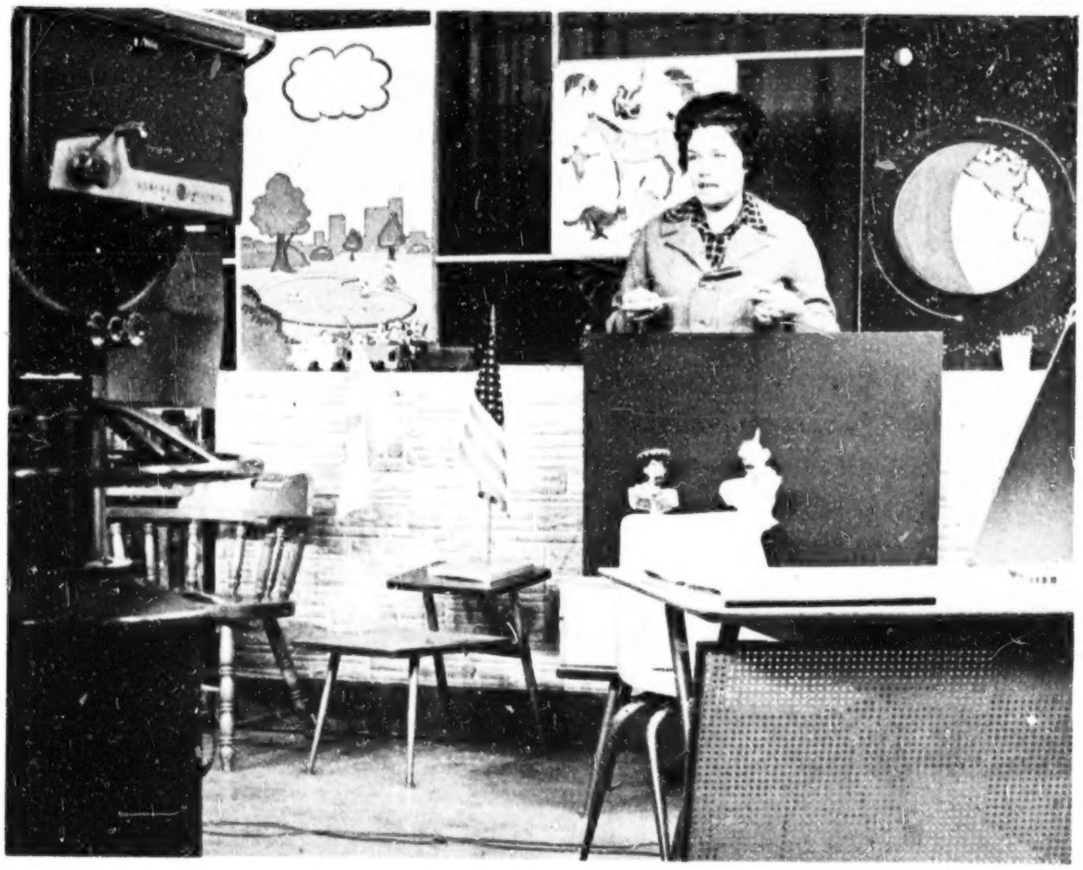
Obviously, KNME-TV is proud that the present season of TV Kindergarten was crowned with the N.E.T. Award for Excellence in creative programing and community service in the Children's category--the third national recognition of the series.

But the greater award happens every day the program is on the air--in the thousands of preschoolers who attend and give Mrs. Marron their time and attention, in the letters their mothers and fathers write, and most touchingly of all in the home-made valentines they sent their teacher saying, "I Love You."

Once Upon a ti
T.V. Kindergarten
KNME-T.V.
1801 Roma N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico

The TV teacher uses the correspondence from her young viewers to help bridge the gap between them. Time each week is devoted to the reading and showing of the work sent in by *TV Kindergarten* viewers. (WNME-TV, Albuquerque, New Mexico)

Puppets provide a message and they do it in an interesting way. (KNME-TV, Albuquerque, New Mexico)



The set is intended to create the feeling of a child's classroom. (KNME-TV, Albuquerque, New Mexico)